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for Parents



NO. 19 • SUMMER 2004

A PROGRAM OF CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER

Splash into Safety!



Drowning remains the second leading injury-related killer of children ages 1-14, claiming more than 900 children's lives each year nationwide. No single safety device will work in all cases of drowning prevention. Effective water safety means the use of four factors – *supervision, environment, gear and education*.

In keeping with SAFE KIDS Week water safety theme of "Splash into Safety!," National SAFE KIDS released the study, *Clear Danger: A National Study of Childhood Drowning and Related Attitudes and Behaviors* which revealed that 88 percent of children who drowned were under the supervision of another person, usually a family member. While better **quality** supervision is critical, the study also found that many adults were not practicing other safe water behaviors such as properly fencing pools, requiring the use of personal flotation devices (PFDs), or teaching their children how to swim. Additionally, SAFE KIDS found that the majority (55 percent) of parents say they are "not at all worried" or "not very worried" about their child drowning.

Here are some more results from the study and what parents can do to keep their kids safe!

Supervision: Be a Water Watcher

⊕ More than half (55 percent) of parents say there are some circumstances where it is acceptable for a child to swim unsupervised.

⊕ Even when parents say they are supervising, many are participating in a variety of distracting behaviors including talking to others (38 percent), reading (18 percent), eating (17 percent) and talking on the phone (11 percent).

Adults should take turns serving as the "water watcher" – a person whose sole responsibility it is to constantly observe children in or near the water.

Environment: Fencing

⊕ While 98 percent of pool- or spa-owning parents report they have taken adequate steps to ensure children's safety, most have not made the necessary environmental changes.

⊕ Nearly two-thirds (61 percent) of pool or spa-owning parents do not have isolation fencing around their pools or spas, and 43 percent have no self-closing and self-latching gate.

Installation and proper use of four-sided isolation fencing could prevent 50-90 percent of residential pool drownings.

Gear: Life Jackets

⊕ Many tweens (kids aged 8 to 12) admit they never wear a life jacket when riding on a personal watercraft (50 percent), participating in water sports (37 percent) or on a boat (16 percent).

⊕ One in five parents (19 percent) mistakenly believes that air-filled water wings can protect their child from drowning.

It is estimated that 85 percent of boat-related drownings could be prevented if all passengers were wearing properly fitting life vests.

Education: Swimming Lessons

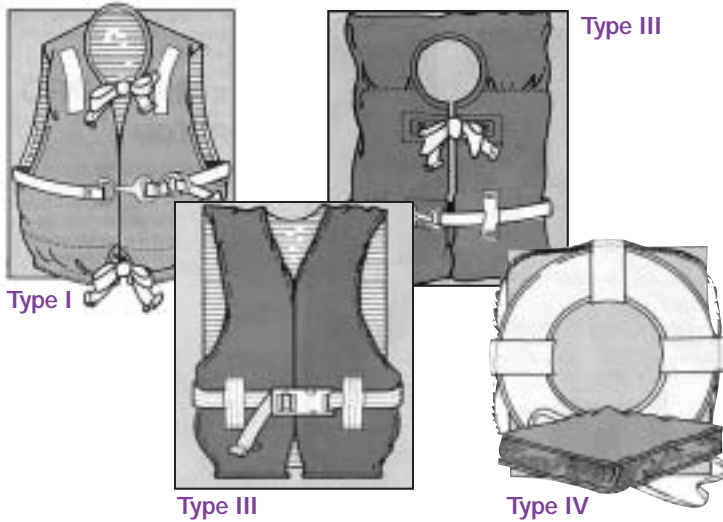
⊕ Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of drowning victims studied did not know how to swim. Seventy-three percent of victims ages five to nine and 30 percent of victims ages 10 to 14 were non-swimmers.

⊕ Although the majority of parents agree that all children should have swimming instruction by the age of 8, 37 percent of parents report that their child has never taken lessons.

Children should be enrolled in swimming lessons with a certified instructor by the age of eight.

Information courtesy of the National SAFE KIDS Campaign.

Do You Know Your PFDs? (Personal Floatation Devices)



One of the important points of water safety is to wear a PFD when you are on or near the water. However, it is also important to know the different types!

Type I PFDs/ Off-Shore Life Jackets are the most buoyant. Best for all waters, open ocean, rough seas or remote water where rescue may be slow in coming. Provides best chance of survival for unconscious wearer or non-swimmer if worn. May be uncomfortable if worn for long periods of time.

Type II PFDs/ Near Shore Buoyant Vests are best for general boating; calm, inland waters; or where there is a good chance for fast rescue. Best compromise between Type I buoyancy and wearer comfort.

Type III PFDs/ Flotation Aids are best for general boating or other uses specified on device. Designed to provide a stable, face-up position in calm water for wearer floating with head tilted back. Comfortable enough to be worn for extended periods of time, but will not keep unconscious wearer's face clear of the water. Not intended for extended survival in rough water.

Type IV PFDs/ Throwable Devices are designed to be grasped and held by user until help arrives. Provides enough buoyancy for wearer to hold head out of water. For use in calm, inland water with heavy boat traffic, where help is always nearby.

Information courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard

Keep informed of Connecticut SAFE KIDS happenings! Sign up for our listserve at groups.yahoo.com/group/ctsafekids.

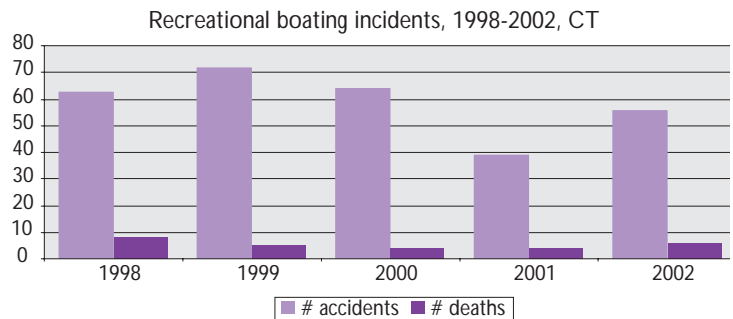
REPORTING ON CHILDHOOD INJURY

Boating Injuries

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In 2002, there were 107,641 registered recreational boats in Connecticut. According to the U. S. Coast Guard, in the five year period (1998-2002), there were 294 boating accidents resulting in 27 deaths. Nationwide, alcohol was involved in 39 percent of all boating fatalities and 40 percent of the children who died were not wearing a personal floatation devices.



Source: U. S. Coast Guard, Boating Statistics – 2002, COMDT PUB P16754.16

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