

# Water Safety

Swimming is a great way to build strength, improve fitness and have fun. It can, however, be very dangerous. It is important that you take great care in and around the water. Always have an adult with you while you swim. Active supervision is the number one factor that can keep you safe in the water.

Beaches, lakes and ponds are very popular swimming spots, however there are hidden dangers that swimmers need to know. When swimming at a beach, always swim between the red and yellow flags. These flags indicate which the part of the beach has been designated by lifeguards as safe for swimming. The flags also show that lifeguards are on duty and ready to help in case you find yourself in trouble.

The ocean is very powerful. Waves can knock you about and the current can tire you out. You should always be able to touch the bottom with your feet. This is particularly important if you are not a strong swimmer.

Another danger at the beach is rip currents. A rip is a channel of fast-moving water which can pull you away from the beach. If you do get caught in a rip, it is important not to fight against it. Instead, stay calm and wave your hand above your head to get the attention of a lifeguard. You can also try and swim parallel to the shore to escape the rip and then allow the waves to take you back to shore.

Swimming in a pond or a lake presents unique dangers. As always, adult supervision is crucial, however it is also important to always ensure the bottom of a lake or pond is free from dangerous objects, such as glass, sharp rocks or branches. Stepping on these objects, or even some marine animals, can cause injuries. It is a good idea to wear protective footwear to be sure. Before jumping in, the depth of the water must be checked. Jumping into shallow water can cause serious injuries.

Even though pools are more of a controlled environment than beaches, lakes or ponds, they can still be very dangerous. Slips and falls are very common causes of injuries in the pool. For this reason, it is important to always walk in the pool area. Tragically, accidental falls into a pool account for almost 80% of drownings.

Whether swimming at a pool, a beach or a pond, it's important to take safety precautions. Number one on the list is having an adult to supervise you having fun in the water.

