

POOL SAFETY FOR CHILDREN

A swimming pool in the yard can be very dangerous for children. If possible, do not put a swimming pool in your yard until your children are older than 5 years. If you already have a pool, protect your children from drowning by doing the following:

- Never leave your children alone in or near the pool, even for a moment.
- You must put up a fence to separate your house from the pool. Most young children who drown in pools wander out of the house and fall into the pool. Install a fence at least 4 feet high around all 4 sides of the pool. This fence will completely separate the pool from the house and play area of the yard. Use gates that self-close and self-latch, with latches higher than your children's reach.
- A power safety cover that meets the standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) adds to the protection of your children but should not be used in place of the fence between your house and the pool. Even fencing around your pool and using a power safety cover will not prevent all drownings.
- Keep rescue equipment (such as a shepherd's hook or life preserver) and a telephone by the pool.
- Do not let your child use air-filled "swimming aids" because they are not a substitute for approved life vests and can be dangerous.
- Anyone watching young children around a pool should learn CPR and be able to rescue a child if needed. Stay within an arm's length of your child.
- Remove all toys from the pool after use so children aren't tempted to reach for them.
- After the children are done swimming, secure the pool so they can't get back into it.

Remember, teaching your child how to swim DOES NOT mean your child is safe in water.

**MATTHEW S. COHEN, MD FAAP
PATIENT INSTRUCTION SHEET**

WATER SAFETY FOR YOUR SCHOOL-AGE CHILD

Swimming and playing in water can give your child much pleasure and good exercise. But you must take steps to prevent your child from drowning.

- Never let your child swim in any body of water without an adult watching.
- Be sure the adult watching your child knows how to swim, get emergency help, and perform CPR.
- Keep a life preserver and shepherd's hook in the pool area to help pull a child to the edge of the pool when necessary.
- Teach your child safety rules and make sure they are obeyed.

-Never swim alone.

-Never dive into water except when permitted by an adult who knows the depth of the water and who has checked for underwater objects.

-Always use a life jacket when on a boat, fishing, or playing in a river or stream.

- Caution your child about the risks of drowning during the winter by falling through thin ice.
- Don't let young children and children who cannot swim use inflatable toys or mattresses in water that is above the waist.
- Watch children closely when they are playing near standing water, wells, open post holes, or irrigation or drainage ditches.
- Teach your child to swim once he or she is ready (usually around 5 years old).