

# PREVENT CHILD DROWNINGS

Know proper precautions, take steps to save lives



Did you know that drowning is the leading cause of death for children under the age of 5 in California? "About 50 percent of those deaths occur in residential pools, spas or hot tubs," says Kacey Hansen, R.N., director of Trauma Services at John Muir Health. To maximize kids' safety, follow the recommendations below, developed by the Drowning Prevention Foundation and California Building Officials.

**GO**

For more info, come to *Summertime Water Safety: Avoiding Childhood Water Accidents* on July 28, 6:30–8 p.m., at John Muir Women's Health Center, 1656 N. California Blvd., Suite 100, Walnut Creek. Call (925) 941-7900 or register online at [johnmuirhealth.com/whcclasses](http://johnmuirhealth.com/whcclasses).

**+**  
Never leave a child unattended near water, even for a few seconds. A child can drown in less than two minutes.

**+**  
Always keep your eyes on children playing in or near any body of water. Assign an adult to supervise kids at large gatherings.

**+**  
Place reaching and throwing aids, such as poles and life pre-

servers, within easy reach on both sides of the pool.

**+**  
Provide all nonswimmers with approved personal flotation devices to wear when they are near water.

**+**  
Do not assume children are immune to drowning if they have had swimming lessons; falling into water unexpectedly could cause them to panic.

**+**  
Be sure that you and all of your child's caregivers know how to swim and how to administer CPR in an emergency. Immediate CPR can prevent death or massive brain damage. For CPR training, visit [johnmuirhealth.com/cpr](http://johnmuirhealth.com/cpr) or contact the American Red Cross.

#### POOL OWNERS:

**+**  
Surround all four sides of your pool with a fence that is at least 5 feet high,

and keep potential climbing aids, such as chairs, away from the fence. Studies in Australia and New Zealand suggest that these fences reduce drowning by 80 percent; an Arizona study showed a 50 percent reduction.

**+**  
Install a self-closing and self-latching gate or door that opens outward, away from the pool. The latch should be on the pool side, out of children's reach.

**+**  
All house doors and windows leading to the pool area should have panic alarms, sliding doors should close automatically, and pools should have automatic safety covers. Don't allow kids into the pool until the cover is removed completely.

**+**  
Drain off the water that accumulates on top of the pool cover because a child can drown in just 2 inches of water.