

MYTHS, FACTS & ACTIONS AROUND WATER SAFETY



Myths, facts and actions for family water safety. Some common misconceptions can lead to danger, discover the facts and stay safe.

MYTH 1 Toddler drownings are uncommon

Fact Drowning is the leading cause of injury related death among children between 1 and 4 years old. Toddlers are at most risk because they are mobile and curious but don't understand the dangers of water

Action Reduce risk by actively supervising children whenever they are near water.

MYTH 2 The number of toddler drownings are decreasing

Fact Sadly, no. In 2013, the number of under-fives drowning jumped to 31 – an increase of 48% over the 2012 total

Action Reduce risk by actively supervising children whenever they are near water.

MYTH 3 All toddlers are equally at risk of drowning

Fact 67% of 0-4 year olds that drowned in 2011/2012 were boys and 80% of coastal deaths are males

Action Be particularly vigilant when supervising boys.

MYTH 4 It doesn't matter what children are wearing

Fact Wet clothes are extremely heavy and can add 20-25% to a child's body weight

Action Provide supervised clothed swimming practice to help a child understand this feeling.

MYTH 5 A First Aid and CPR certificate means you can rescue your child

Fact Not always. As little as 5 minutes underwater can lead to brain damage or death

Action Reduce risk by actively supervising children whenever they are near water.

MYTH 6 One year of swimming lessons is enough

Fact Not usually. One lesson per week during a school year, is only 20 hours. That's less than one day in a full year

Action Allow adequate time for full swimming skills to develop.

MYTH 7 I'll hear my child if they fall in

Fact Drowning is often silent, without splashing or yelling. Usually children don't have the ability to work out what to do when they are panicking, even to the point of remembering to stand up in shallow water

Action Don't rely on your ears, keep children in sight whenever they are near water.

MYTH 8 The beach is supervised by lifeguards so my kids will be safe

Fact Not necessarily. There are often many people and relatively few lifeguards. It is your responsibility to actively supervise your children

Action Swim between the flags and watch your children.

MYTH 9 Once a beach is safe, it's always safe

Fact Not necessarily. Waves and wind can change sandbars and rips, making the beach unsafe

Action Swim between the flags and always check the beach yourself.

MYTH 10

Children on a lake or river bank are safe

Fact Not necessarily. Even if your child knows not to go in the water, river and lake banks can be slippery or unstable and collapse under them

Action Activity supervise your children, keeping them away from the water's edge.

MYTH 11 My child is not at risk of drowning when the beach is not patrolled

Fact More than 50% of drowning deaths at the beach occur outside of normal patrolling times

Action Be especially vigilant outside of patrolling hours. Do not swim at all if you are not 100% confident.

MYTH 12 My child is not at risk of drowning when the beach is not patrolled

Fact More than 50% of drowning deaths at the beach occur outside of normal patrolling times

ACTION Be especially vigilant outside of patrolling hours. Do not swim at all if you are not 100% confident.

MYTH 13 My child is a good pool swimmer, they will be safe at the beach

Fact Not always. Cold water, rough water, rips, wet clothing, tiredness and panicking can get even good pool swimmers into trouble

Action Allow your child to experience a variety of water environments, with and without goggles, under active supervision.

“Swim between the flags and watch your children”

We would like to thank; Kidsafe, Royal Life Saving Society, Kidsafe Victoria and splashmagazine.com.au for data used in these information sheets.

