



# Backyard Pool Safety

**B**ackyard pools can provide many hours of summer fun, but they can also be dangerous. Owning a backyard pool or hot tub comes with the responsibility of ensuring its safe use. Most often, children who drown do so in a pool when a caregiver is not paying attention, if only for a second. These drownings primarily involve young children who gain access to a pool without a self-closing and self-latching gate.

## Tips:

There are simple steps that families can follow to keep their backyard pools safe.

- Build a fence (recommended at least 1.2 m in height, with gaps no larger than 10 cm) that has a self-closing and self-latching gate; keep the gate closed with restricted access at all times. Refer to your municipal bylaws for fencing requirements.
- Establish pool rules. These can include: swim with a buddy, children must have an adult with them at all times, and no glass containers around the pool.
- Few backyard pools are safe for diving - swimmers should always enter the water feet-first.

- Have readily accessible reaching or throwing assists, a working phone and first aid kit.
- Have an Action Plan including adult supervision, an emergency signal, safety equipment and emergency procedures.
- Keep the deck clear of toys and debris.
- Do not use alcohol or drugs in or around the pool.
- Small on-ground portable or kiddie pools should be emptied when not in use. Above-ground pools should have the ladder or steps removed when not in use.
- Hot tubs should not exceed 104° F or 40° C and are not recommended for pregnant women, toddlers or infants.

**Active adult supervision is of the utmost importance** - never leave your child unattended, not even for a second.

- Lifejackets or Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) should be worn by weak or non-swimmers, but they are not substitutes for supervision by an adult with good swimming skills, or a lifeguard.
- Enroll your children in Red Cross swimming lessons.

- Improve your swimming skills and learn how to prevent drownings and how to make safe rescues by taking a Red Cross Swim Course.
- Learn what to do in case of emergency—take a Red Cross First Aid Course and encourage youth to take a Red Cross Lifeguard Course.
- Take your children with you if you have to leave the pool for any reason.
- Pick the best time of the day to swim. Avoid swimming at night and in stormy weather.

The best time to swim is during the daytime. If there is thunder or lightning, stay out of the pool.

- Use sunscreen with a minimum SPF 15 even on cloudy days, and reapply every 3-4 hours.
- Wear a wide-brim hat, sunglasses, and light clothing to cover your skin whenever possible.



Canadian  
Red Cross

You can help when help is most needed. Give to the Red Cross.

