

# Precautions help keep kids safe in water

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Children can drown in as little as 2 inches of water, pediatrician warns.

(HealthDay)—Close supervision is crucial to keep children safe when they're swimming or playing in the water, an expert says.

Drowning is the leading cause of accidental injury and death among American [children](#) aged 1 to 4, and can occur in as little as two inches of [water](#).

"The single most important thing is to never take your eyes off children who are in the water. Not even for a few seconds. Nine out of 10 drowning deaths occur when a caregiver is supervising but not paying attention," Dr. Maribeth Chitkara, an associate professor of clinical pediatrics and a pediatric hospitalist at Stony Brook Children's Hospital in New York, said in a Stony Brook news release.

If you're with a group of people or at a party, you need to assign one person to supervise children. Switch the person who is watching every 20

minutes to keep them fresh.

"It is important to keep an eye on children and especially toddlers when around any kind of water—small kiddie pools, toilets, buckets of water when washing the car and the like," Chitkara said.

Even if a lifeguard is present, never assume that he or she will always keep track of your children. It's also a good idea to keep a phone near the pool.

If you have a pool, install complete four-sided isolation fencing. It can prevent 50 percent to 90 percent of child drownings or near-drownings, according to Chitkara.

It's also a good idea to get safety covers for pools, whirlpools and spa tubs, and to use a toilet seat lock if you have an infant or toddler.

**More information:** The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more about [water safety](#).

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