



## The ABCs of Water Safety

*By Ashley Culver*

May 22, 2014

Children love to splash and play around water, particularly on hot summer days. Swimming and splashing are great exercise and fun, but water and children can be a dangerous mix under unsafe conditions. Follow our ABCs for tips to keep your children safe this summer.

Drowning is among the leading causes of death in Tennessee for children ages 1 to 18. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates nearly 390 children younger than 15 drown in swimming pools and spas each year across the nation. Of those victims, 76 percent are younger than 5.

“Drowning is silent and can happen in an instant.” said Purnima Unni, Pediatric Trauma Injury Prevention Program manager. Making sure children learn how to swim is one of the most important steps parents can take to protect their children from drowning.”

Unni reminds caregivers to always remember to use the ABCs of Water Safety:

### A – Adult supervision

- Active adult supervision is key — at least one adult should be focused on the pool and close enough to touch the swimmers if necessary.
- Designate an adult “water watcher.” This person’s sole responsibility is to watch the pool area for 15 minutes and not read or talk on the phone. After 15 minutes, pass the responsibility to another adult for 15 minutes, and so forth. Ensure that the “water watcher” is a sober adult who knows CPR and has basic swimming skills.
- Floaties (inflatable armbands) or other inflatable flotation devices are not life jackets and should never be substituted for adult supervision.

### B – Barriers and boating safety

- Have a properly working physical barrier such as an isolation fence, pool safety cover and pool alarm that meets code requirements.
- If the home opens directly to the pool, door alarms and locks should be installed.
- Always swim at a lifeguarded beach, and pay attention to the beach warning flags. Wear properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard approved life jackets while on a boat.

### C – Classes

- Teach children to swim. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends swimming lessons for children as young as 1.
- Adults and children 13 and older should learn infant and child CPR.