DROWNING PREVENTION

Did you know…?

• Drowning is the 2nd leading cause of death in BC for toddlers 1 - 4 years old and near-drowning is the leading cause of hospitalization

• 50% of children who drown are alone and unsupervised

• For each toddler who dies from drowning, there are 6 to 10 near-drowning cases that require hospitalization

• Among the survivors of near-drowning, 20% sustain permanent brain damage

• In BC, 59% of drowning deaths to children and youth occur in natural waters during swimming or water transportation-related activities such as boating and jet skiing

• Each year in BC there are over 43 deaths from drowning and 285 hospitalizations for near-drowning across all ages

Where do drownings occur?

- Swimming Pools 24%
- Natural Waters 59%
- Bathtubs 18%
- For infants 64% drown in bathtubs
Prevention Tips - At Home

- Supervise your child at all times. A small child can drown in as little as 1 inch of water in just a few seconds.
- If your young children are unable to swim, ensure they are wearing protective gear such as an approved flotation device.
- Build a fence (4 sided, 4 ft tall) to surround all pools, including inflatable pools, with a self-closing, self-latching gate. Pool fencing can prevent 7 out of 10 drownings among children.
- Ensure you have emergency equipment including a first aid kit and a phone in the immediate pool area.

Tragic cases seen at BC Children’s Hospital

- A one year old baby was left unattended in the bath. When mom returned, the baby was submerged in the tub.
- A 2 year old was found face down in an inflatable pool where she nearly drowned.
- A 6 year old was found unconscious at the bottom of a pool at a birthday party. She was just learning how to swim.
- An 8 year old was found with her head stuck in a 20 foot water wheel where she was dragged under water and trapped for 10 minutes.
- An 11 year old was playing the breath holding game in a lake under the dock. She was found floating face-down and almost died.

Prevention Tips - During Recreation

- Make sure children are well supervised by adults at all times in and around water. Be your child’s lifeguard.
- Enroll your children and yourself in swimming lessons.
- Ensure everyone is wearing an approved personal flotation device or lifejacket on a boat, on the beach, or at the lake.
- Learn CPR and/or lifesaving techniques.
- Be cautious about swimming in currents, and know what to do if you get into trouble.
- Alcohol should not be consumed before or during swimming or boating activities.
- When hiking be mindful of staying on the trails and avoid fast-flowing rivers.

Useful Resources

- BC Injury Research & Prevention Unit (www.injuryresearch.bc.ca)
- Safe Start (www.bccchildrens.ca/safestart)
- Canadian Red Cross (www.redcross.ca)
- Mustang Survival (www.mustangsurvival.com)
- Safe Kids Canada (www.safekidscanada.ca)
- Boatsmart! Canada (www.boatsmartexam.com)
- BC Hydro (www.bchydro.com)
- Lifesaving Society BC (www.lifesaving.bc.ca)

For more information, visit us at www.injuryresearch.bc.ca