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Health and wellness tips for your work, home, and life—brought to you by the insurance and healthcare specialists at Moreton & Company.

Swim Safety in the Summer Sun

Tips for avoiding injuries while splashing about

Cooling off on a hot day at the pool, lake, oceanfront or water park can be great fun. However, drowning is a real concern when enjoying yourself at these water retreats, even if you're just swimming in your backyard. In fact, drowning is the second-leading cause of injuries for children under age 14, and even experienced swimmers are always at risk. Since a person can drown in less than two minutes once his/her head goes under, water safety awareness is intrinsically important to the health of you and your family.

Swimming Pools

Do not be fooled that swimming in a pool is safer than other areas, as there are still dangers when splashing around, even in the

shallow end. Here are some tips for safe pool swimming:

- Do not dive off the side of the pool or from the diving board unless you are sure that it is deep enough to safely do so. Check the depth marker on the side of the pool or ask a lifeguard to be sure.
- Test the pool temperature before you go in. If the water is too cold, it may shock your body when you enter and cause your blood pressure and heart rate to elevate. Excessively cold water can also cause your muscles to slow, which can make swimming more difficult.
- Always monitor children when they are in and around a pool. Teach them that swimming without an adult is strictly prohibited.
- Do not enter a private pool area when the gates are locked; the pool is obviously not open to you for swimming at that time and it may be dangerous to do so without proper supervision.
- Always obey the posted pool rules.
- Swim with a buddy or friend at all times.
- Never run on a pool deck.
- If you are just learning to swim (applies to adults and children alike), stay in an area of the pool where the depth is safe for you to stand.
- Do not horseplay with others in a pool, as you could hurt yourself or someone else.
- Pool toys (inner tubes, air mattresses, beach balls, etc.) are



not designed to be safety flotation devices and cannot protect you, if you start to struggle in the water. Avoid using these as such, and use only Red Cross certified life jackets.

- Do not chew gum or eat while swimming.

Lakes and Ponds

Swimming in the outdoors can be quite a treat on a nice day, especially if you are surrounded by beautiful scenery. Despite this, you cannot always see the bottom of lakes and ponds, which can make drowning a realistic concern. To remain safe while you swim in fresh water:

- Wear water shoes to protect your feet from jagged rocks, broken bottles, trash, etc.
- Be careful of weeds and grass which can trap your feet. If you do get tangled, slowly pull and shake your arms and legs out of the mess to get yourself loose.
- Stay away from boats, jet skis and other motorized water vehicles.

Oceans

If “hanging 10” is what you love to do, then the oceanfront is probably one of your favorite places to frequent on warm days. Here’s how to remain safe while you swim at the beach:

- Ask the lifeguard about the wave strength when first arriving at the beach. Some beaches also fly

flags or hang signs indicating the current conditions as well.

- There is a real danger of encountering undertows, ocean currents and riptides while swimming in the ocean. These dangers can carry swimmers away from shore before they know how far away they are. If you are caught in a current, swim parallel to the shoreline until the water stops pulling you, and then swim straight back to shore. If you cannot safely make it back, tread water while flagging down a lifeguard for assistance.
- Watch out for jellyfish and Portuguese man-of-wars. These are umbrella-like shaped animals that are clear and swim near the shoreline. If you get stung by one of these animals, find a lifeguard immediately to seek treatment.
- Never swim alone or at night at the beach.
- Always swim in an area where a lifeguard can see you, and only in areas that are marked for safe swimming.
- Wear water shoes if the ground surfaces are rocky or rough.
- Do not swim out too far.
- Avoid swimming close to piers; if you encounter a big wave, you

could hit a large rock or post.

- Never use glass containers at the beach.
- When swimming, always face the waves as opposed to turning your back to them.

Water Parks

Water parks are tons of fun and are not just for kids; they are designed for everyone who is young at heart! Here are some safety tips to remember before jumping in for some fun:

- If you are not a strong swimmer, wear a flotation device.
- Read all the signs and directions before going on a ride. You should be tall enough and not have any medical conditions (such as pregnancy) that would warrant a danger for you to enjoy the ride. If you are unsure if it is safe for you to go on the ride, ask a lifeguard.
- Always make sure there is a lifeguard on duty before going on a ride, and always listen to their directions.
- Go down waterslides face up and feet first.

Did you know...?

Knowing your limits in the water is important. If you swim too long, you could develop a muscle cramp or other physical ailment that makes it harder for you to swim safely. If you do find yourself struggling, get out of the water immediately and give your body a rest.