

Swim Safely This Summer!

By Mary Rhoads

Summer is almost here in the Temecula valley and with the warmer weather many families are heading to the pool or beach. A few safety reminders from local Murrieta swim instructor, Casie Shore and the National Safety Council (NSC) will insure your next swim outing will be safe.

Learn to Swim

If you haven't learned how to swim, now is the time. Many local schools, the YMCA and private instructors offer swim lessons for people of all skill levels.

“Toddlers and babies can be introduced to swimming at a very young age. Instructional lessons aren't necessary, but even babies as young as six months old can benefit greatly by experiencing the newness of water in the arms of their trusted parent,” explained Casie Shore who instructs swim lessons locally. “The time spent discovering this new environment together can add to the special bonding of parent and child,” she added.

Constant Supervision

Most safety organizations agree that constant supervision of children, even experienced swimmers, is the best way to avoid pool or beach accidents. The National Safety Council recommends the use of a Coast Guard approved personal flotation device, but not as a substitute to learning how to swim.

“Floaties can give parents a false sense of security. They don't replace mom or dad being in the water and watchful of their children,” explained Shore.

Never Swim Alone

Even experienced swimmers have been known to tire, black out, have a seizure, heart attack or any other number of physical problems that can lead to drowning. The most ideal swim situation is to swim with a buddy and near a lifeguard.

Never Dive in Unfamiliar Water Depths

Teach your children to enter the water feet first. Most aquatic related spinal injuries occur due to diving into shallow depths or unknown water depths. The U.S. Lifesaving Association advises that spinal injuries can have lifelong consequences and diving into shallow depths can cause this type of injury.

Swim Diapers for Toddlers

While chlorine and disinfectants generally destroy bacteria, the National Spa and Pool Institute suggests toddlers wear diapers specially designed for swimming.

Avoid Alcohol Consumption

Drinking alcohol lowers your body temperature and impairs judgment and swimming ability. The U.S. Lifesaving Association says that alcohol is a “major factor” in drowning.

Follow Pool Rules

We have all heard and seen the No Running signs posted at the pool. Slipping onto the concrete surfaces surrounding a pool due to running can cause serious injuries. Be aware of other swimmers and stay clear of the diving board area when swimming.

Swimming Should Be Fun!

“Parents should remember that children learn how to swim at their own unique pace. Becoming an efficient swimmer is a huge milestone for children and requires a great deal of effort, skill and developmental readiness,” says Shore. Although swimming lessons are usually an exciting time for a beginner, they can also be a little scary. A positive atmosphere filled with lots of encouragement and praise is critical to promote a successful learning experience.

“Swimming is one of the best exercise therapies for children and adults,” explained Casie. “It is very rewarding to watch young and old students alike become efficient, confident swimmers.”

For more information on swimming safety the following websites are worth a visit: www.nsc.org, www.usla.org and www.nspf.com. Casie Shore can be reached at 951-600-5702 or on the internet at www.swim2shore.com.