Drowning Prevention
Water can be dangerous!

- Playing in the water is lots of fun, but always remember –

water can be dangerous!
A person can drown:

- In small amounts of water:
  - A bath tub
  - A shallow pool
  - A bucket
  - A trench or ditch
- When other people are around
- Quietly... without yelling or splashing
- Quickly... in just seconds
Even if someone survives after nearly drowning:

- They may still suffer serious health problems:
  - Brain damage
  - Memory problems
  - Breathing problems
  - Loss of movement
Who is most at risk of drowning?

- Men
- Infants and children under age 5
- Teenagers (especially boys)
- People with seizure disorders
- People with disabilities that:
  - Limit movement
  - Make it hard to notice danger
Most drownings happen when people:

- Swim in pools, lakes or the ocean without someone constantly watching
- Drink alcohol while playing near water
- Go out in a boat or raft without a life jacket
- Leave someone who has seizures or who can’t support themselves (including babies) alone in a bathtub
How can you keep from drowning?

- Never swim alone.
  - Use the buddy system. Always swim with a friend!
  - Always know where your buddy is.

- Only swim in areas where:
  - A lifeguard or experienced swimmers are watching
  - It says it is safe to swim - Look for ropes or signs
How can you keep from drowning?

- Never dive into water if you don’t know how deep it is! Go in slowly.
- Never swim after drinking alcohol.
- This tip sheet will help you stay safe near water!

Wear a life jacket!

- Always wear a life jacket at the pool, the beach or on a boat. Make sure it fits!
  - The size should be on the inside of the jacket.

- Test the fit of your life jacket.
  - Lift your arms straight up above your head.
  - Turn your head to the right and to the left.
  - The chest portion of the jacket should not touch your chin when you turn your head.
Stay safe at the beach.

- The beach can be fun, but the ocean is not like a swimming pool!
- The ocean is unpredictable. Waves and currents can be dangerous.
- Look for signs that say:
  - If it is safe to swim.
  - Where it is safe to swim.
- Check what the weather will be like before you go.
Stay safe at the beach.

- “Sneaker” waves can be dangerous.
- Sneaker waves are bigger than normal waves. They can pull people into the water without warning.
- Protect yourself from sneaker waves.
  - Always have someone with you.
  - Always watch for the next wave.
How can you tell if someone else is drowning?

- When someone is drowning they are just trying to breathe. They may:
  - *Not* be able to call for help
  - *Not* be splashing

- There are some signs to watch for. A person who is drowning may:
  - Have their head tilted back
  - Be looking around for help
If you think someone is drowning, act quickly!

- Tell other people and call 9-1-1.
- Tell the person to stay calm, look at you and kick their feet.
- Throw them a floating object (a life preserver or cushion).
If someone is drowning, DON’T go in the water yourself.

- You can help only if you stay safe!
- You may get hurt by going into the water to help someone.
  - They may pull you underwater, too.
  - There may be dangerous waves or currents in the water, even if you can’t see them from the shore.
- Only a trained and certified lifeguard should go in the water to help a drowning victim.
Drowning can happen at home.

- Many drowning accidents happen in the bathtub.
- If you have seizures or if it’s hard for you to take a bath, don’t be shy... ask for help!
- Never leave a child or person who can’t support themselves alone in the bathtub.
- If there is a pool where you live, make sure it’s fenced in and keep the gate locked.
Learn more about water safety and drowning prevention:

- CDC – Water-Related Injuries: Fact Sheet

- Safety Guidelines for Swimming Pools
  - [http://www.dds.ca.gov/Drowning/docs/drowning_safety_guidelines_06.pdf](http://www.dds.ca.gov/Drowning/docs/drowning_safety_guidelines_06.pdf)
Resources about drowning prevention for support persons:

- Avoiding Drowning Deaths for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities
  - [http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/node/892](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/node/892)

- Drowning Prevention, DDS