Drowning and Near Drowning Accidents are Preventable

As the weather warms and summer approaches, it is a good time to think about preventing water related injuries and deaths.

In California, drowning is the leading cause of injury-related deaths among children under the age of five. In 2011, statewide a total of 58 children through age 5 died as a result of drowning. 30 of those deaths were from pool drowning. These deaths were preventable.

In addition to the deaths of young children, there are approximately 52 children each year in our state who were victims of near drowning and are seen by the Department of Developmental Services. These survivors of near drowning accidents often experience disabilities for the remainder of their lives. These include central nervous system damage contributing to varying levels of brain damage. Each year, near-drowning incidents result in life-long disabilities.

To prevent drowning consider a “layers of protection” approach including:

- Never leave a child alone near water, even for a few seconds
- A supervising adult should be close enough to touch the child under 4 years old near water
- Keep a constant adult eye on young children
- All collections of water are dangerous for infants and toddlers including bathtubs, buckets, toilets, ponds, spas, swimming pools and natural water sites
- Swimming pools should have fences, alarms and drains that meet regulations
- Pool gates should be self-latching, opening outward, with the latch out-of-reach for a child
- Keep reaching and throwing aids near a swimming pools
- All children should wear a personal flotation device while playing near bodies of water
- Parents and caregivers should know how to perform rescue techniques and strategies to respond in an emergency
- If a child is missing, check the pool first.

Thank you for taking part in Drowning Prevention this year!

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