

TOPIC: THE IMPORTANCE OF WEARING A LIFE JACKET

Key Points to Cover (for Parents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Young children and anyone who cannot swim well should wear a life jacket whenever they are in, on or around water.▪ Even in public pools or waterparks, people who cannot swim well should wear a life jacket.▪ Everyone should wear a life jacket when they are on a boat.▪ Life jackets are not a substitute for close supervision. Young children and poor swimmers need close supervision at all times.▪ Whenever children are in, on or around the water, a responsible individual should be designated to provide constant supervision and stay within arm's reach if the child is young or a poor swimmer, even if the child is wearing a life jacket.▪ Life jackets are available in several types and many styles. They are rated for their buoyancy and purpose. You should check the label to ensure that you're using the correct life jacket for the right purpose.▪ The type of activity and water conditions help determine which type to use.▪ For any type, be sure it is U.S. Coast Guard-approved and in good condition.
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TOPIC: WATER TOYS AND THEIR LIMITATIONS

Key Points to Cover (for Parents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ It is important to know the difference between a toy and a lifesaving device.▪ Inflatables, such as water wings, swim rings and other flotation devices, are not substitutes for U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets. Some of the materials used in many of these devices deteriorate in the sun and through contact with rough pool surfaces, resulting in leaks.▪ These devices enable swimmers to go beyond their ability and may lead to a drowning situation, if the device falls or slips off.
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Key Points to Cover (for Parents - Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A flotation device or a U.S. Coast Guard – approved life jacket is never a substitute for close supervision.▪ When using inflatables, it is important to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Inspect the child's toys to make sure they are safe and working properly.○ Read the manufacturer's instructions and make sure that children follow the instructions.○ Be sure that children do not play with toys that have parts or strings that may lead to entanglement.○ Use common sense. If a toy seems unsafe, it probably is unsafe.○ Make sure that children play with toys that are age-appropriate.▪ Water wings and inflatable toys are great fun but they are just that, toys. These items may provide a false sense of security and should not be relied upon for safety. It is vital that parents and caregivers know the difference between toys and proper safety gear.▪ The only truly safe accessory is a personal flotation device (PFD) approved by the U.S. Coast Guard (check for the Coast Guard stamp).▪ Kids – and adults – who are weak swimmers or who appear to rely on inflatable toys for safety should wear a U.S. Coast Guard – approved whenever they are in or around the water. Each person should have the appropriate life jacket for his or her weight, which is found clearly marked on the U.S. Coast Guard stamp.
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Children may not like to wear life jackets. Try taking them on a shopping trip where they can pick out their own life jacket. Including them in the decision will allow for a better fit and help promote wearing of the life jacket at all times in or on the water.▪ No matter what a child is wearing and no matter what flotation items are at hand, he or she should never be left unattended in or around the water. Always practice “reach supervision” which means that you are within arm’s length of the child at all times. |
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