

PUBLIC HEALTH NOTES



Portable Pool Safety

Portable pools are fun on hot summer days. They are cheaper than in-ground or permanent above ground pools. Portable pools include wading pools, inflatable pools, soft-sided and self-rising pools.

A recent study, conducted by researchers at the Center for Injury Research and Policy of the Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio found that these pools are more dangerous than parents realize. According to the study, every 5 days a child drowns in a portable pool during the US summer months. Ninety-four percent of fatal and non-fatal submersion events happened in children under 5 years old and 73% happened in the child's back yard.

Parents can easily underestimate the risks of portable pools. "It only takes a couple of minutes and a few inches of water for a child to drown," says Gary Smith, MD, DrPH, senior author of the study. Greater than 40% of the children in this study were being supervised by an adult at the time of the event. A brief lapse in supervision such as answering the phone was enough to distract the adult.

To prevent submersion and drowning, parents must be alert.

Here are some tips:

- Focus on supervising your child in the pool, not socializing or doing chores
- Be within one arms length of a child in the pool at all times
- Talk with your children about water safety at an early age
- Make rules for the pool:
 - No one in the pool without an adult present
 - No running, jumping into or pushing in the pool
- Empty the pool after use
- Tip the pool upside down when not in use to prevent it from filling with rainwater

Remember that a child can drown in a couple of minutes in only 2 inches of water!