

Get water wise... **SUPERVISE!**

Dry Drowning Fact Sheet

Many families will be heading to the neighborhood pool to beat the heat this summer. Children will splash and swim under their parent's watchful eye, and may swallow some water in the process. After a fun-filled day, everyone will dry off and head home. Hidden in this scenario is an almost unthinkable tragedy. A child can drown in the small amount of water he or she swallowed. All it takes is for that water to get into the lungs, depriving the brain and other organs of oxygen. This is called "dry drowning".

What is dry drowning?

Dry drowning occurs when water gets into a child's lungs after a near-drowning episode. The child does not drown from an immediate immersion in water, but from a delayed effect of a small amount of water in the lungs.

How long after an incident is there a risk for dry drowning?

Dry drowning usually occurs between one hour and 24 hours after an incident. A child can have a drowning incident, be pulled out of the water, be OK, and then sometime within the next 24 hours, he or she can dry drown.

What should I do if I think a child is at risk?

A parent cannot treat a dry drowning episode alone. Call a doctor or bring the child to an emergency room if there are signs of dry drowning following a near-drowning incident.

Can dry drowning be treated?

Yes. If it is caught early, dry drowning can be treated. The treatment involves supplying oxygen to the lungs and getting the breathing process restarted.

Information from:

<http://blogs.babiesonline.com/2008/06/10/how-to-protect-your-child-from-dry-drowning/>

<http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=90057>

Are there any risk factors for dry drowning?

Yes, there are risk factors and situations in which dry drowning may be more likely, such as if the child is not a good swimmer or is a first-time swimmer. Children and adults with underlying lung problems such as asthma may also be at increased risk for dry drowning. To prevent an incident, use common sense and never let inexperienced swimmers in the pool without direct supervision.

Are there any red flags that suggest a child is at risk for dry drowning?

Yes, there are some signs that a child may have a dry-drowning episode. They include:

- Extreme tiredness
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Changes in behavior (like mental confusion or decreased alertness)
- Chest pains
- Persistent cough
- Change in the color of the skin or sweaty skin

These signs are an indication that the brain is being starved of oxygen due to water in the lungs. To prevent the tragic results of dry drowning, anyone who has had difficulty in water should be monitored closely to identify any of the above signs.