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## Summertime is Pool Season – Keep it Safe!

Swimming is a favorite summertime activity all over the country. Unfortunately, tragedy can strike quickly and unexpectedly.

### Did you know?

- Drowning is one of the largest causes of accidental death for U.S. children under the age of five
- Drowning is usually silent, with very little splashing to alert anyone that the child is in danger.
- Accidents happen very quickly, usually in less than a minute

### Pool injuries and drowning can be prevented by:

- Having children younger than age 5 always within an arm's length of an adult while in or around the pool
- Never using pool floatation devices as a substitute for supervision
- Equipping the pool with multiple layers of protection: fencing, alarms, rope and float lines, rescue equipment, emergency information and a phone
- Ensuring that someone supervising the group knows CPR
- Not permitting infants and toddlers in a hot tub due to the likelihood of overheating

### The Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act of 2007

Entrapment is another pool and hot tub injury that is preventable. Entrapment in pool drains occurs when swimmers' hair, jewelry or other body parts are sucked into swimming pool drains. Often, the swimmer drowns or is disemboweled. Since 1999, there have been more than 80 incidents where people became entrapped in pool and spa drains; 11 of these were fatal.

The risk of entrapment in swimming pool drains and spas risk was brought to the nation's attention following the entrapment death of 7 year old Virginia Graeme Baker. The Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act of 2007 was effective December 19, 2008. This act requires all public pools and spas to have drain covers that meet ANSI/ASME A112.19.8-2007 standards. Also, public pools and spas with a single, blockable main drain or pool with drains less than 3 feet apart must also have an additional safety device which will either shut down the pump system or release the suction if a blockage is detected.

### Tips to prevent entrapment:

- Ask – does the pool you are using meet the new standards?
- Never allow swimmers to enter a pool or spa that has a loose, broken or missing drain cover
- Do not allow swimmers to play or swim near drains or suction outlets, especially in spas and shallow pools

**Remember – just because a person can swim does not mean they are safe in the water!**

**Sources:** US Consumer Product Safety Commission <http://www.poolsafety.gov/>  
The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals <http://www.apsp.org/Public/Home/index.cfm>  
American Academy of Pediatrics <http://www.aap.org/family/tippool.htm>

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