

**Special points of interest:**

Child Passenger Safety Seat Checks — June 8, 12, 22, 26

Child Passenger Safety Seminars — June 10 & 23

Drowning Prevention Seminars—June 10, 20, & 23

Call 952-4536 for locations & times, or go to: <http://brevard.ifas.ufl.edu>

**In this issue:**

Pool Safety—Keeping Kids Safe with Layers of Protection 1

Protecting Your Child's Eyes During Celebrations 2

June 2009

Volume 1, Issue 6

Physical layers, such as fencing, serve to limit access to a pool or spa area or to restrict access to the water itself.



# For Safety's Sake

## POOL SAFETY—KEEPING KIDS SAFE WITH LAYERS OF PROTECTION

Backyard swimming pools are a source of family fun and entertainment all year round in Florida. What's more, lakes, ponds, rivers and the ocean are also ever-present. As the weather warms, the number of families engaged in swimming and other water play activities increases. Unfortunately, the number of drowning incidents also increase. In fact, drowning is the leading cause of death for children birth to age four in Florida. Deaths from drowning in this age range are double the national average and higher than any other state in the nation. More than two thirds of the drowning deaths occur in pools. For every pool drowning for children birth to four, five non-fatal drowning incidents occur, with 20% experiencing severe and permanent neurological disabilities.

An unrealistic awareness of the risk of drowning is a major contributor to the drowning of young children. Parents and caregivers often do not understand that a child can drown in less than two minutes, and that there is usually no splash or scream when a child falls into a pool. Education, supervision, and layers of protection are primary means to keeping children safe while around swimming pools.

### Layers of Protection

The National Drowning Prevention Association stresses that no single device or solution can prevent child drowning incidents. Parents and caregivers should use "layers of protection" to provide a system of increased security to prevent unauthorized access to bodies of water. Multiple strategies or devices should be used constantly and simultaneously.

### Supervision

Supervision is the one layer that should be ever present no matter what other layers are utilized. Supervision is always the first and last line of defense against drowning. Other layers will simply buy more time to react if unauthorized access should occur. Supervision should be used during both water and non-water activities. Whenever children are in the water, a designated "Water Watcher" should be used to keep constant supervision over all children in and around the pool, and an adult should be within arms' reach whenever an infant or toddler is in or near the water.

### Physical Layers

Physical layers serve to limit access to a pool or spa area or to restrict access to the water itself. Layers limiting access to the pool or spa area include property line or perimeter fencing, isolation fencing (both permanent and removable), gates, latches, and house doors. Maintenance of these systems is necessary to keep them effective. Layers limiting access to the water include pool and spa safety covers and ladders. When choosing safety covers, choose only those that meet ASTM International voluntary standards F1346-91, be sure to properly use and maintain them, and never allow children or pets to play on these covers. Ladders for above-ground pools should be secured and locked or removed when the pool is not in use and should never be accessible to children without adult supervision.

### Alarms

Alarms are an important addition to creating a safer pool and spa environment. Alarms alert adults of unauthorized access to the pool area and the water, serving as a last line of defense, and allowing adults to respond to an emergency more quickly. Alarms can be present on doors and windows, on gates, on the surface or below the water, and on children.

### Swimming Lessons

Swimming is not an instinctive skill for humans and both children and adults must be taught to swim in order to survive. Children can be taught survival skills and how to swim at an early age, but should never be considered "drown proof," as even an Olympic swimmer can drown. When considering swim instructions, make sure the instruction includes water safety and survival skills taught

at an age appropriate level. Also, understand that one lesson is not enough, and that skills should constantly be developed and maintained.

### Emergency Response

Preparing for an emergency is a final layer in protecting children. Emergency response includes having a phone poolside in case of an emergency and having certification in CPR and rescue breathing. Parents and care-givers are also encouraged to take a water safety and rescue course and to have rescue equipment poolside. Finally, whenever a child is missing, ALWAYS CHECK THE POOL FIRST!

To learn more about drowning prevention and the layers of protection, sign up for one of our drowning prevention classes at <http://brevard.ifas.ufl.edu>.

## PROTECTING YOUR CHILD'S EYES DURING CELEBRATIONS

Fourth of July celebrations are a time for families and friends to gather and enjoy one another and the freedom we have as a nation. Unfortunately, celebrations can turn tragic, especially when fireworks are being used. Several thousand fireworks injuries occur each year around the Fourth of July time period, with many of these injuries being to the eye. Prevent Blindness America is dedicated to keeping eyes safe, and to this end, offer the following suggestions to make your Fourth of July celebrations safe.

### Alternative to Fireworks

- Allow children to make decorations using crepe paper, construction paper, stickers and glue. Making decorations is a fun activity for children and can help make the party look festive,
- Plan food-creating activities where children make their own pizzas, desserts and other food items. With assistance, even children can skewer their own vegetables and meat. And, what children make, they are more likely to eat!,
- Make an activity of decorating T-shirts or hats with paints or other items that glow in the dark,
- Attend a professional fireworks show,
- Provide safe sounds and sparkles (see lists below).

### Safe Sounds

Provide safe alternatives to the noise made by fireworks, as this is often part of the attraction. These can include:

- Stepping or sitting on inflated balloons until they pop,
- Inflating small bags (lunch bags are a good size). Popping the bags makes a nice, loud "BANG",
- Buying different noisemakers from a store. Different

brands and types of noisemakers make many unique, and loud sounds,

- Using old pots, pans and pie plates to create your own noise-making set,
- Using horns, whistles, bells and cymbals will also to make noises.



**Fireworks are responsible for several thousand injuries each year.**

### Safe Sparklers

Children love sparklers and parents often see these as "safe" fireworks. However, sparklers burns at 1200 degrees C, hot enough to melt gold. As an alternative to sparklers, consider the following:

- Use glo-sticks, glo-ropes and glo-jewelry to provide safe and fun ways to brighten an evening,
- Wrap flashlights in colored cellophane to light the night,
- Capture fireflies or lightening bugs in a jar. Capturing them is fun and plus there is the added bonus of the light provided by the collection. Once the fun is over, remember to release them back to nature,
- Purchase novelty flashlights. Different ones have mirrors to bounce the light, changeable colored filters, or optic fibers that look like sparklers but are much safer,

For more information about keeping your families eyes safe, visit Prevent Blindness America at <http://www.preventblindness.org>.

Source: Safe Summer Celebrations. FS88 2005. Prevent Blindness America. [http://www.preventblindness.org/resources/factsheets/SafeSummer\\_FS88.PDF](http://www.preventblindness.org/resources/factsheets/SafeSummer_FS88.PDF)

Main Office  
3695 Lake Dr  
Cocoa, FL 32926  
321-633-1702

Visit our UF/IFAS—Brevard County Extension Service website  
for all of the programs we offer! <http://brevard.ifas.ufl.edu>

\*\*\*\*\*

If you would like to receive this monthly newsletter, simply call us at 321-952-4536, or sign up on our Website at <http://brevard.ifas.ufl.edu>.

South Office  
1455 Treeland Blvd. SE  
Palm Bay, FL 32909  
321-952-4536