



# Drowning



Babies and young children are inquisitive, active and eager to explore. They are attracted to water because it shines, ripples and splashes, but they don't understand its dangers and what to do if they get into trouble. Their big heads and top heavy bodies means they can easily lose their balance and fall into water. When this happens they are at risk of drowning in even just a few centimetres of water like a puddle or ditch.

Children can drown quickly, in just a matter of minutes, and often silently. The common places children drown changes with age. Babies and toddlers often drown in buckets and baths. Pre-schoolers are more likely to drown in home swimming pools. Older children

and teenagers who may consider themselves better swimmers than they are underestimate strong currents. They can quickly find themselves in danger and are more likely to drown in rivers and the sea.

Children who survive drowning may be left with severe brain and/or organ damage and long-term disabilities.



**3** children die from a home drowning every year.



**13** children are hospitalised from a home drowning every year.



Around **4** children aged 1 - 2 years drown each year.

## THE CAUSES



### 0-12 MONTHS

Tipping over in bathtubs and falling into toilets and buckets.



### 1-4 YEARS

Lack of swimming ability in swimming pools, paddling pools and spas.



### TEENS

Getting caught in lakes, rivers and the sea

## WHO IS GETTING INJURED?



### 1-2 YEARS

Account for more than 50% of home drownings.



### BOYS

Are 1.5 times more likely to be injured than girls.



### MĀORI

Māori children are 3 times and Asian children 2 times more likely to be hospitalised than European children.

## SAFETY DEVICES



- Four sided pool fencing (1.2 metres high) with self-closing, self-latching gate (swimming/paddling pools and spa pools).
- Safety latches or doorknob covers for bathroom doors.
- Toilet seat latches or locks.
- Swimming lessons.
- Floatation swimming devices.

## WHERE IT HAPPENS

Children can drown quickly and silently in less than 5cm of water.



### IN THE HOME

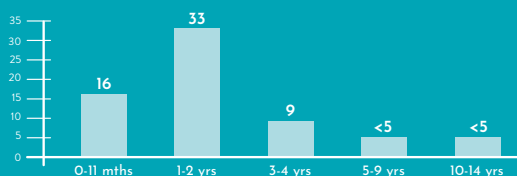
- Sinks
- Baths
- Buckets
- Toilets



### OUTDOORS

- Puddles
- Ditches
- Swimming and paddling pools
- Lakes, rivers, and the sea

## HOSPITALISATIONS 2013-2017



## THE TREND



Rate of hospitalisations for near-drownings in the home has increased about 45% over the past 10 years.

## Top Safety Tips

**Drowning is the 3rd leading cause of death from unintentional injury in children.**

Water safety is important at any age, but especially for babies and toddlers.

### Birth to 11 months

- Maintain hand and eye contact with a child while they are in a bath or around water. If the doorbell or phone rings, it's best to remove a child from the water, wrap them in a towel and take them with you.

### 1-2 years

- Always empty baths, buckets and paddling pools after use and close the toilet lid.
- When emptying the bath make sure the plug or toys do not accidentally block the drain.
- When on holiday, check for water hazards and that pool gates are secure and locked at all times.

### 3-4 years

- Only let children in, on and around water when you are free to supervise them at all times, without any distractions (including your phone). Keep within arm's reach of toddlers so you can help them quickly if needed.
- Use four-sided pool fencing (1.2 m high) with a self-closing, self-latching gate.
- Teach children from a young age how to be safe around water.

### 5-9 years

- Teach children the importance of swimming between the flags at the beach.
- Enrol a child in swimming lessons as soon as they are ready.

### 10-14 years

- Personal flotation devices should always be used in boats.
- Discuss the dangers of risk taking and why it's important to have rules around water.
- Adults should role-model safe swimming practices.

#### **First aid for a child that has drowned**

- Get a drowning child out of the water as quickly as possible. If they aren't breathing, place them on their back on a firm surface and start CPR.
- Call 111 or ask someone to call for you if you have help there.
- Do not stop performing CPR until medical help arrives and takes over.

If your child is injured you can find out more about ACC support at [www.acc.co.nz/im-injured](http://www.acc.co.nz/im-injured).

ACC Claims: 0800 101 996 or email [claims@acc.co.nz](mailto:claims@acc.co.nz).

For detailed references on the data and information contained in this card and to download additional copies visit [www.starship.org.nz/safekids/reference-cards](http://www.starship.org.nz/safekids/reference-cards).