



# THE INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES OF NORTH TEXAS

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## Keep Your Family Safe this Summer!

With the temperatures soaring in the high 90s and reaching 100 degrees in July, many families head for the lake or swimming pool to seek relief from the heat and to have some fun. However, summer can be a very dangerous time for children and youth unless precautions are taken to observe common safety rules. The **American Red Cross** offers literature to help families keep their children safe from harm.

1. Every summer there are tragedies of babies and toddlers who are left in a hot vehicle with the windows rolled up and the doors locked. Don't leave your child in your vehicle even for a minute to run into the grocery store, mail a letter, or talk to a neighbor. The inside of the vehicle on a hot day can reach over 110-120 degrees in a few minutes.
2. Home swimming pools are especially dangerous if a toddler or small child wanders out of the house and steps in or falls into the pool. Make sure your pool has a fence and a locked gate that is "toddler and child proof."
3. Watch out for children on skate boards or bicycles when backing out of your driveway or driving on the street. If your child has a bike or skate board, insist that they wear a helmet.
4. Texting or talking on your cell phone while driving is a huge distraction. Put that phone away in your purse or glove compartment until you have parked your vehicle.
5. Heat exhaustion can happen to children as well as adults if staying outside in the hot sun too long. If you suspect heat exhaustion, cool the body down immediately with cold towels and call for medical assistance.
6. Watch out for the dangerous "too's"—too tired, too hot, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.
7. When boating at the lake, insist that children and adults wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket. Warn children and youth to swim only in designated areas at the lake or in a swimming pool under your watchful eye.
8. Sign up your child for swim lessons taught by a **Red Cross** certified teacher. Learning to swim is the best way to stay safe in and around water.
9. Make sure that family members swim with a buddy, never alone.
10. Swim in areas supervised by a Life Guard and obey safety rules on all posted signs.
11. Know your child's limits and swimming ability. Inexperienced swimmers should stay in water less than chest deep.
12. Be aware of potential hazards in the water such as deep or shallow areas, depth changes, obstructions, and where entry and exit points are located.
13. Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts. Get out of the water at the first indication of bad weather, especially if you see lightning.
14. Use feet first when entering the water, unless the area is clearly marked for diving and there are no obstructions.
15. Know how to prevent, recognize and respond to emergencies! Dial 911 if you need police, fire or medical assistance. By observing a few simple rules, your family can have a safe and happy summer!

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