

Developed by Everyone Swims

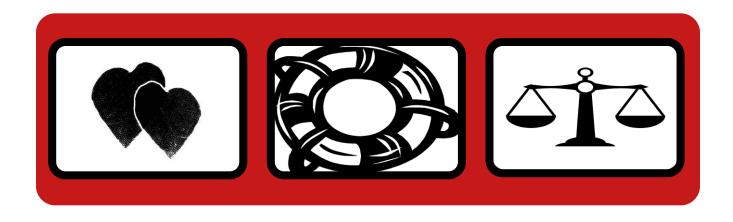


Overview

- I. Background: Importance of Swimming
- II. Health Care Professionals: Your Role in Swimming
 - a. Assess
 - b. Encourage
 - c. Refer
- **III. Additional Resources**

Background: Importance of Swimming

Learning to Swim Improves...



Physical Activity

Safety

Equity

Physical Activity

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day; swimming is one option.¹
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends swimming lessons starting at age 4.²
- Knowing how to swim creates opportunities for other water recreation (e.g. kayaking, rowing, and surfing) and jobs (e.g. lifeguard).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Fact sheet for health professionals on physical activity guidelines for children and adolescents. June, 2009. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/pdf/PA Fact Sheet Children.pdf

^{2.} Spear BA et al. Recommendations for treatment of child and adolescent overweight and obesity. *Pediatrics*. 2007; 120;;S254-S288.

Safety

- In Washington State, drowning is one of the leading causes of unintentional injury death among children and youth.
- 85% of drowning fatalities occurred in open water (lakes, rivers, and ocean).¹
- Most drownings occurred while swimming and playing in or near the water.²
- Taking formal swimming lessons is associated with an 88% reduction in drowning risk.³

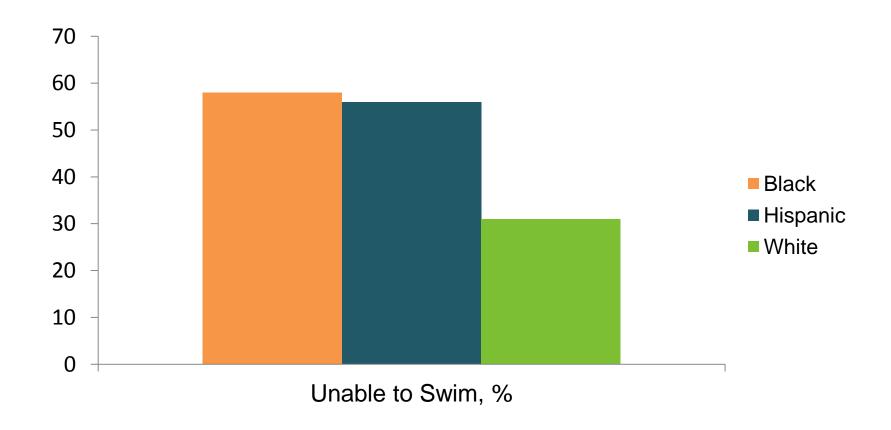
^{1.} Washington State Drowning News Clippings

Child Death Review 1999-2007

^{3.} Brenner R, Taneja G, Haynie D, et al. The association between swimming lessons and drowning in childhood: a case-control study. Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2009; 163(3):203–210.

Health Equity

Ability to Swim



^{1.} Irwin, C.C., Irwin, R.L., Ryan, T.D., Drayer, J. Urban minority youth swimming (in)ability in the United States and associated demographic characteristics: Toward a drowning prevention plan. *Injury Prevention*, 2009, 15: 234-239.

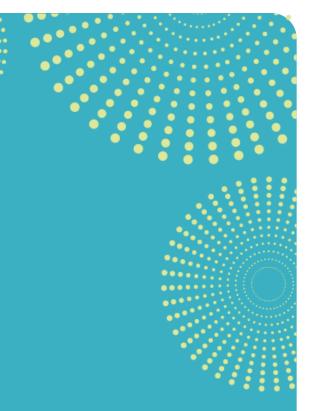
Health Care Professionals: Your Role in Swimming

Promoting Swimming

Health care professionals have a unique opportunity to promote swimming. Here are steps you can take in your health care organization to promote swimming:

- Assess for swimming ability, interest, and barriers
- Encourage learning to swim
- Refer families to local pools for swim lessons





Swimming Assessment

We recommend health care professionals assess for:

- Safety
- Physical activity
- Swimming ability
- Barriers to swimming

In this section we provide examples of questions you may want to ask families and encourage you to tailor questions to your families and your organization.

Sample Questions: Safety and Physical Activity

Safety

Learning to swim is especially important if a person has regular exposure to pools, rivers, lakes, beaches, and ponds. Regular exposure to recreational water can put a person at risk for drowning if s/he doesn't know how to swim. Here are some questions you can ask:

- 1. Are there lakes, rivers, beaches, or pools near your home?
- 2. How often does your family go to lakes, rivers, or beaches?
- 3. How often does your family go to a pool?

Physical Activity

Learning to swim may be a fun physical activity for some youth and families. Here are some questions you can ask:

- 1a. What type of physical activity does <name> do?
- 1b. Has s/he tried swimming?
- 2a. What type of physical activity do you do as a family?
- 2b. Has your family tried swimming?

Sample Questions: Swimming Ability

Swimming Ability

Asking about swimming ability is helpful. Sometimes people will say they know how to swim, but haven't had formal swimming lessons and can't pass a swim competency test that allows them to swim in the deep end of a pool. Here are some questions you can ask:

- 1a. Has <name> learned to swim?
- 1b. What type of swim lessons did <name> have?
 - 2. Can <name> swim from one end of the pool to the other end?
 - 3. Can <name> swim or float for 10 minutes in the deep end of a pool without touching the bottom or grabbing on to the side?

Sample Questions: Barriers

Barriers: Learning to Swim

There are many factors may influence a person's decision to learn to swim. The following are a few examples: Parent/caregiver inability to swim; fear of water; cultural beliefs about swimming; concerns about water cleanliness; ability to pay for lessons, pool fees, and swimming accessories (e.g. swimsuit); language differences; and discomfort with/inability to participate in co-ed swimming. Here are some questions you can use to help you identify barriers:

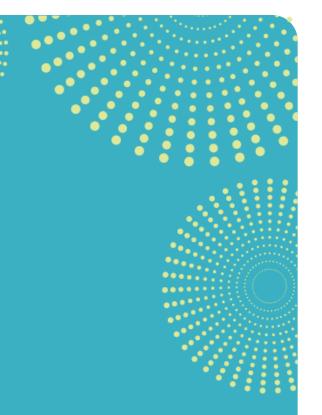
- 1a. What makes it hard for <name> to learn to swim?
- 1b. What would make it easier for <name) to swim?)
- 2a. What makes it hard for your family to learn to swim?
- 2b. What would make it easier for your family to learn to swim?

Checklist

These are steps you can take to make swim assessments a routine part of your health care organization:

- □ Add a swimming assessment question to your:
 - ☐ Electronic Health Record (EHR)
 - ☐ Electronic Medical Record (EMR)
 - ☐ Paper-Based Screening (e.g. well-child checkup questionnaire)
- □ Assess kids at 4 year well-child checkup and follow-up at 5 and 6 year well-child checkups.
- □ Assess parent/caregiver/family swim ability.





Encouraging Swimming

In this section, we've provided key messages to help you start a conversation that encourages learning to swim. Here are some tips on how to effectively use the key messages:

- After listening to a family during the swimming assessment, think about what will motivate their interest in learning to swim.
- Tailor the key messages to the families unique interest, experiences, and barriers.

Key Messages for Families

Safety

- a. Learning how to swim is important for your safety. Knowing how to swim can keep you safe in and around pools, beaches, lakes, rivers, and ponds.
- b. Knowing how to swim helps protect kids from drowning. Swimming at beaches and pools with lifeguards, adults watching kids around water, and wearing a life jacket also protect kids from drowning.
- c. Kids, teens, and adults can learn to swim at pools and beaches with lifeguards and teachers.

Physical Activity

 Doctors recommend that kids be active (play sports, walk, etc) for at least an hour a day to stay healthy. Swimming is one option.

Key Messages for Families

Fun

- Many families like to swim together. Pools have family swim times and swim lessons.
- b. When you know how to swim, you can do other water activities like kayaking and surfing.
- c. Being a lifeguard is a popular summer job for teens. Knowing how to swim can help <name> get a summer lifeguard job at a local pool, beach, or water park.
- d. Many teens go to beaches, lakes and rivers. When <name> becomes a teen, s/he might go there with friends. <Name> might be embarrassed if s/he can't swim and might not tell his/her friends.

Swim Lessons

- Many pools have reduced fees and scholarships to help you pay for swimming.
- b. Many pools have different types of classes. Check with <local pool> to learn about gender-only swims, family swims, water exercise, and other types of swim lessons.

Checklist

These are steps you can take to make encouraging swimming a routine part of your health care organization:

- Make swimming and water recreation handouts available in waiting rooms and exam rooms.
- Give swimming and water recreation handouts to patients.
- ☐ Give registration and scholarship application forms to patients.
- Assist families with filling out registration and scholarship application forms.



Refer

Referring to Swim Lessons

Health care professionals have a special opportunity to refer youth, adults, and families to swimming lessons. We recommend that you partner with 1 or more local pools in the community to:

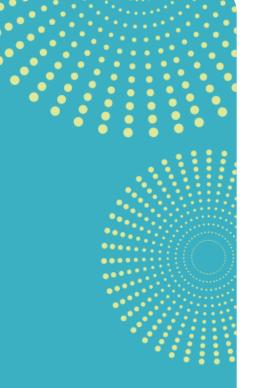
- Provide information on pool swimming classes.
- Tailor the key messages to the families unique interest, experiences, and barriers.

Checklist

These are steps you can take to make referrals to swimming a routine part of your health care organization:

- Identify 1 or more local pools to partner with.
- Develop a referral system between organization and pool (e.g. fax or e-mail referrals to swimming).
- □ Partner with a local pool to host an "open house" event for families to become familiar with the pool and swimming.





Everyone Swims Tools and Resources

http://www.seattlechildrens.org/dp

Everyone Swims

- Complete List of Policy and Systems Change Priorities
- Stakeholder Needs Assessment
- Families Needs Assessment

Screening

- Screening and Referral Pocket Card
- Screening for Health Care Providers PowerPoint
- Partner Examples

Referrals

- Swimming and Water Recreation in Seattle, South King, and East King (includes Google Maps)
- Sample Job Description
- Partner Examples



Acknowledgements

Thanks to our water and clinic partners, community partners, and project team for their commitment to the health and safety of youth and families:

Water and Clinic Partners

Columbia Health Center, Covington Aquatic Center, Evergreen Pool, George Pocock Rowing Foundation, Harborview Children's Clinic, HealthPoint, International Community Health Services, Issaquah Pool, Kent Meridian Pool, Mt Rainier Pool, Neighborcare Health, Odessa Brown Children's Clinic, Orca Swim School, Resident Champions from the WA Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Roxbury Clinic, Sea Mar Community Health Centers, Seattle Parks and Recreation, YMCA of Greater Seattle

Community Partners

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Acknowledgments

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YMCA of Greater Seattle