Promoting Swimming and Water Safety

Why Ask: Importance of Swimming

- Swimming addresses injury and obesity prevention.
- Most drownings occur while swimming and playing near water.

What to Ask: Screening for Swimming Ability

- What type of physical activity does <name> do? Has <name> tried swimming?
- Can he/she swim the length of a swimming pool?
- Can s/he swim or float for 10 minutes without touching the bottom or side of a pool?
- Is there a pool at your house or apartment?
- Do you ever visit lakes, rivers, beaches or pools?
- What makes it hard for <name or your family> to learn to swim?

When to Ask: Well-Child Visits

- Screen and refer to swimming at 3 or 4 year well child visit; screen earlier if child has access to pool or open water.
- Follow-up at 5 and 6 year well child visit
- Identify barriers and assist with referral to swimming lessons.
- Follow-up on swim lesson participation during subsequent visits.

What to Watch For: Barriers to Swimming

Factors that influence people's decisions to learn to swim:

- Cultural beliefs about swimming
- Concerns about water sanitation
- Ability to pay for lessons and pool fees
- Parental ability to swim
- Fear of water
- Language differences
- Discomfort with / inability to participate in co-ed swimming

How to Encourage Swimming:

Exercise Talking Points

- It’s important for kids to be active; swimming is one option.
- Swimming is a lifetime skill and great way to be active.
- This is a really good time in <name> life to learn to swim.
- Swimming may be a fun family activity. There are swimming lessons for families.
- Swimming pools usually have reduced fees to help you pay for swim lessons.

Water Safety Talking Points

- Most drownings are preventable. Learning to swim can help you/your child.
- Proven water safety strategies include learning to swim, barriers around pools and spas, life jackets that fit, quality adult supervision, and lifeguards.

Additional Resources

Download more resources, including pool maps and life jacket and water safety information, at: http://seattlechildrens.org/dp/.

Local Pools

For quick referrals, identify the name, address, phone number, and website for local pools near your practice:

1.

2.