

Safe Swimming Tips

According to [Great Lakes Surf Rescue Project](#), there were 40 Lake Michigan drownings in 2017 alone so please heed these simple tips! (compiled the Galter LifeCenter, Swedish Covenant Hospital)

1. Take lessons seriously.

Swimming lessons are more than a chance for parents to socialize and kids to work off some extra energy—they can save lives. At Galter LifeCenter, we're doing our part to educate both children and adults about proper swimming techniques. "We teach our community the skills and awareness they need to succeed at swimming," said Mali Spray, private swim lesson instructor at Galter LifeCenter. "The ability to swim confidently and well is a life-saving skill that everyone should master. It's never too late to learn."

2. Supervision is key.

Whether you are lounging by the pool while your children splash around or are trying to beat your personal record for 50-yard freestyle in five-foot waves, supervision should never be overlooked.

- **If you're swimming by yourself**, note where the nearest lifeguard is before getting in the water.
- **When watching children**, give them your undivided attention—now is not the time to catch up on emails! If you have other adults in your group, trade 15-minute shifts of watching the kids. And never allow children to supervise other children, no matter how responsible they are.

Bonus tip: Always swim with a buddy, regardless of your abilities or age. Always know where your swimming buddy is and provide assistance if needed—and don't be afraid to ask for assistance yourself.

3. Floatation devices are not drown proof.

Thinking of using a floatation device as a swim aid? That's great! Pass up the kickboards and "noodles" for a vest approved by the U.S. Coast Guard in the pool. But remember, even approved devices aren't drown-proof. There is no replacement for proper supervision, swimming ability and caution.

4. Follow the rules.

That likely means no running, no diving, no rough housing and no swimming after dark. These rules are to ensure your safety, and should not be ignored or belittled.

5. Protect your skin.

Sunny day? Cloudy day? Mid-day? End of day? Put on sunscreen. Protect your skin from harmful UV rays before entering the pool, *every time*. The hottest part of the day is accompanied with the largest amount of UV rays. No matter how well the water helps you beat the heat, it will never succeed in protecting you from UV's harmful effects.

"The most important thing is reapplication," said [Emily Rubenstein, D.O.](#), a dermatologist at the [Swedish Skin Institute](#). "Most problems of sun overexposure occur when individuals do not use enough sunscreen or fail to reapply. You should reapply sunscreen before the time that the label suggests, and always after getting wet. There is no such thing as waterproof sunscreen or a 'healthy' tan."