

# LEADING CAUSES OF SUMMER INJURY – DROWNING

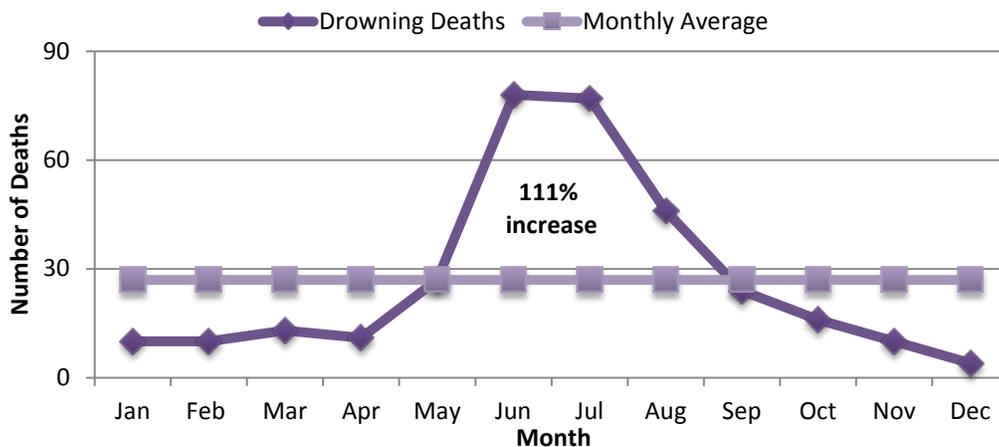
Ohio youth’s drowning risk increases substantially (111 percent) during summer months. Read on to learn more about water safety and drowning prevention.



## Ohio Data

- Drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death for Ohio children ages 1 to 4 and the third-leading cause for ages 5 to 9. On average, 27 Ohio children and youth aged 1 to 19 drown each year.<sup>1</sup>
- Drowning deaths among Ohio youth increased 111 percent in the summer months (May – August) over the average annual monthly rate. Seven out of 10 (70 percent) drowning deaths among Ohio youth occurred in the summer months (Figure 1.).<sup>1</sup>

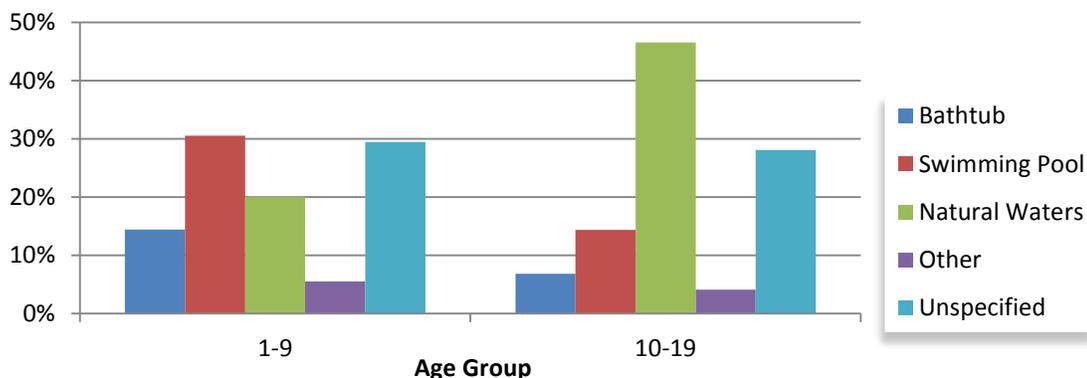
**Figure 1. Unintentional Drowning Deaths for Ages 1-19 by Month, Ohio, 2002-2011**



<sup>1</sup>Source: Ohio Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics

While children can drown in water anywhere, younger children (aged 1 to 9) are at greater risk of drowning in bathtubs and swimming pools while older youth (aged 10 to 19) are at greater risk of drowning in natural bodies of water (Figure 2.).<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 2. Distribution of 'Where Drowned' among 1-9 and 10-19 year old Drowning Deaths, Ohio, 2002-2011**



Source: Ohio Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics

## Drowning Prevention for Parents and Caregivers - Put Water Safety First<sup>1</sup>

We all want to help our children live to their full potential and keep them safe and secure. Thankfully, parents can play a key role in protecting the children they love from drowning. Here are some good first steps to prevent drowning:

- **Fence it off.** Install a four-sided isolation fence, with self-closing and self-latching gates, around backyard swimming pools. This can help keep children away from the area when a parent cannot supervise them. Pool fences should completely separate the house and play area from the pool. If children can gain access to pools through the house or poorly-latched gates, they are at risk of drowning. Installing and properly using this type of fence could prevent 50 percent to 90 percent of swimming pool drownings and near drownings of children.<sup>2</sup> Door alarms, pool alarms and automatic pool covers can add an extra layer of protection when used properly, but should not replace a fence and good supervision.
- **Make life jackets a "must."** Make sure all kids wear life jackets (also known as personal flotation devices or PFDs) in and around natural bodies of water, such as lakes, rivers and ponds, even if they know how to swim. *Ohio law requires children under the age of 10 to wear a PFD at all times on boats under 18 feet long, however older children will be safest when they wear PFDs too.*

### **Child PFD Requirements (Ohio Revised Code 1547.24)**

No person shall operate or permit to be operated any vessel under 18 feet long with a child less than 10 years of age on board unless the child is wearing a PFD.

#### **The PFD must be:**

- U.S. Coast Guard approved Type I, II, III, or V;
  - In good and serviceable condition;
  - Of appropriate size;
  - Securely attached.
- **Learn CPR.** Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and get recertified every two years. Immediate CPR can help a child stay alive and reduce the chance of brain damage.
  - **Be on the look out.** Supervise young children at all times around bathtubs, swimming pools, ponds, lakes, and other bodies of water. Start a "Water Watchers" program at backyard pools. See the [Safe Kids USA](http://usa.safekids.org/safetytips/field_risks/swimming-and-water) [http://usa.safekids.org/safetytips/field\\_risks/swimming-and-water](http://usa.safekids.org/safetytips/field_risks/swimming-and-water) website for more information. Although many parents think that they would hear their child splashing or shouting for help, drowning is often silent and occurs quickly.
  - To avoid drain entanglement and entrapment in pools and spas, install anti-entrapment drain covers and safety vacuum release systems.
  - Begin teaching children to swim after age 4. *Water safety programs for young children should not be a substitute for good supervision.*



<sup>1</sup>CDC *Protect the Ones you Love*

<sup>2</sup>*Safe Kids US Summer Safety Ranking Report, May 2007*

## For more Information on Drowning and Water Safety for Children:

- **CDC: Protect the Ones you Love from Drowning**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/SafeChild/Drowning/index.html#materials>
- **Safe Kids USA – Drowning** <http://usa.safekids.org/water-safety>
- **Consumer Product Safety Commission – Swimming Pools and In-home Drowning Safety**  
<http://www.cpsc.gov/nsn/drowning.html>
- **Children’s Safety Network – Water Safety**  
<http://www.childrensafetynetwork.org/injurytopics/drowning-prevention>

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