



BATH TIME SAFETY

Q. When do bathtub drowning deaths occur?

A. The majority of bathtub drowning deaths occur when there is a break in an interruption to bathing routine; for example, the doorbell rings while a parent is bathing the children. In over 80% of bathtub drowning deaths, children were already bathing when they drowned. If you have to leave the bathroom for any reason – take your child with you.

Q. Can I leave my child alone for a small amount of time?

A. No, many parents and carers mistakenly believe they will “only be gone a minute” but this is enough time for tragedy to occur.

Q. Why do parents leave their child unsupervised in the bath?

- A. Parents left their child unsupervised in the bath because they were:
- fetching forgotten clothes/towel
 - doing the washing
 - answering/making phone calls
 - doing the dishes
 - attending to self
 - attending to other children

Q. Can you hear your child drown?

A. Parents also mistakenly believe they can listen out and will hear their child drowning. Drowning is swift and silent, drowning is not accompanied by children crying out or splashing. Bath time supervision must involve an adult in the bathroom with the child. An older sibling should never be left with the responsibility of looking after a younger child.

Q. Can you use a bath seat or bathing aid?

A. Yes, however bath seats or bath aids are not substitutes for constant adult supervision. These devices do not prevent children from climbing or falling out of the seat and drowning, and parents should not believe their child is any safer in one of these devices.

Q. What else can I do to help prevent my child from drowning

A. Make sure you empty the water out of the bath when finished. Learn resuscitation, it is a lifesaving skill and the life you save with this knowledge may be a loved one. Make sure you plan bath time before and have all the necessary items ready.

REAL LIFE STORY

While my son was bathing, I was in the room with him and we were playing with his toys. When I finished washing him, I left him in the bath for a minute, or it could have been five, to get his clothes. The water wasn't very deep. When I came back in, I found him face down in the bath.

Bath time for young children should be fun, but tragically every year in Australia, a number of young children drown in bathtubs. Toddler drowning is preventable.

Bathtime CHECKLIST:

- Before running a bath, have all equipment ready – towels, pyjamas, slippers
- If you have a cordless phone, bring the phone into the bathroom. If you do not have a cordless phone, let the phone ring and ignore the doorbell while the children are in the bath.
- Have a small fold up chair in the bathroom to sit on while the children are in the bath
- DO NOT LEAVE** the bathroom at all for any reason.
- After bath time ensure the bath tub is drained immediately and keep the bathroom door closed when not in use.

Royal Life Saving has developed a number of fact sheets on water safety issues in Australia. Contact Royal Life Saving on:

1300 RESQ ME
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