



March of Dimes poster children Scott Cunningham (center) and John Wesley Gaines (right) helped make this year's nationwide fund drive the most successful ever. This year's campaign raised more than \$780,000, bringing total contributions over the past eight years to nearly \$6 million to the March of Dimes helping give all babies a healthier future.

Six Rules For Water Safety

The outdoor season always includes the unnecessary tragedy of "accidental" drowning.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers believes that you can return home safely from a water outing by following some common-sense precautions.

Six simple rules will help you and your family or friends to play it safe and stay alive.

1. Stay sober. People flock to the lakes to enjoy the sun and the water. But the combination of sun and water plus alcohol can be deadly. Alcohol affects coordination and judgement. Two out of three drowning victims in the U.S. were affected by alcohol or other drugs. Alcohol makes non-swimmers out of swimmers.

2. Use an approved life vest or life jacket. People in the water safety business call these personal flotation devices (PFD's). The PFD can save your life, but only if you have it on. The newer PFD's are light weight, comfortable and stylish. Many are designed to double in use as hunting or fishing vests. Investigation shows that two out of three drowning victims had no intention of ending up in deep water, so wear your PFD.

3. Know your boat. Most boat-related deaths are preventable drownings. Learn the basic rules of boating, and don't overload your boat. Poor swimmers, non-swimmers and those with alcohol in their system are in the greatest danger in an overloaded boat.

4. Don't go alone. Most drownings occur 10 to 30 feet from shore. Water is dangerous, and you can drown quickly. It's always safer to have a companion in the water or in a boat, preferably a swimmer.

5. Watch the children. One out of 10 drowning victims are between the ages of one and four. Most of them were not being constantly watched. Children move fast and can get into trouble as soon as you turn your head.

6. Learn to swim. Two out of three drowning victims can't swim. Knowing how to swim is the first defense against drowning. It can help to avoid panic, and keep you afloat long enough to get help. Even good swimmers need to be careful, since many lakes and streams have dead trees, debris or rocks along the bottom.

Following the six rules of water safety can save your life.

Everyone is welcome to use Army Corps of Engineers water recreation facilities — in a safe and reasonable manner.

The use of auto seat belts and the campaign against drunk driving is working on the highways. The water safety version of this program is wear a PFD, and don't drink.

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