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KRISTEN GERENCHER'S  
**Health Matters**

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May 24, 2010, 2:15 PM EDT

### New advice for kids' swimming lessons; Plus, a warning about batt

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With summer just around the corner, many families are looking forward to relaxing and enjoying warm-weather recreation such as swimming. But parents can't afford to relax too much when their kids are around water, even though the American Academy of Pediatrics now says formal swimming instruction for toddlers and preschoolers age 1 to 4 may help prevent drowning.

To be sure, the AAP isn't going so far as to recommend swimming lessons for kids age 1 to 4. It warns that some children may not be ready for them anyway and that such lessons can't "drown-proof" kids of any age — they don't replace the need for adults to supervise children closely while in pools. But the pediatricians' group is "more open" to the idea of classes for younger children based on small studies that suggest some training may reduce the likelihood of kids drowning, which is the leading cause of death in little ones age 1 to 4 and a major source of fatalities in youth of all ages. Toddlers and teenage boys are most at risk.

Drowning prevention is one of the top items in this week's [Vital Signs column](#), which focuses on [five ways to keep your kids safe this summer](#).

Check out the [AAP's updated advice and 11 tips on water safety](#), which highlight the need for special drains in and four-sided fencing around pools as well as the growing danger from large, inflatable pools.

"To protect their children, parents need to think about layers of protection," Dr. Jeffrey Weiss, lead author of the [policy statement](#) and [technical report](#), said in a statement.

"Not every child will be ready to learn to swim at the same age," he said. "Swimming lessons can be an important part of the overall protection, which should include pool barriers and constant, capable supervision."

### Add small batteries to your baby-proofing list

Separately, the AAP also highlighted the rising danger of "button" battery ingestion among kids. Many household products now contain 20-mm lithium batteries as power sources, but they can cause serious, lasting damage to the children who swallow them, according to the AAP, which found a nearly seven-fold increase in the portion of "severe outcomes" related to battery-ingestion incidents among kids younger than 6 from 1985 to 2009, including 13 deaths.

Batteries that come in remote controls are a common risk. In 37% of the more than 8,600 cases studied, the 20-mm lithium cell, described as the most hazardous battery kids ingested, was intended for use in remote controls, according to the AAP.

American Academy of Pediatrics, battery, children, danger, drowning, ingestion, lessons, policy, pools, preschoolers, remote controls, swimming, teenagers, toddlers

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