

get ready to Take the plunge

a guide to
swimming with
your baby

STARFISH

In association with

HUGGIES
Little Swimmers



Building Safer, Healthier & Better Skilled Communities



Water safety advice from STA for new Mums & Dads

Our children are our most precious gift and as parents we want to make sure that they are always happy, healthy and safe.



Drowning is the 3rd largest cause of accidental death amongst children in the UK.

A shocking statistic in itself, but when you consider that younger children and babies are most likely to drown at home or in a garden, you can begin to recognise the importance of water safety education.

As responsible parents we naturally want to protect our children, and a good way to do this is to improve their confidence in and around water and teach them to be water safe.

So how can you do this?



This is how we do it:

1

Teach your children to swim. Swimming is a life skill that's not only fun and healthy, but will also increase their water safety awareness. STA has a progressive learn to swim and water familiarisation scheme that can be started when your baby is just a few weeks old, which incorporates water safety from the first lesson.

2

Follow the RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) Water Safety Code and, when your children are old enough, make sure that they know the code and always follow it.

Being aware of the dangers is half the battle towards preventing accidents, and this is precisely why we've chosen to produce this leaflet. Please read through the simple advice contained and keep this leaflet somewhere safe so that you can refer back to it.

I wish you all many years of happy and safe swimming with your family!

Roger Millward
Chief Executive
STA



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Water Safety Code

1. Spot the dangers

Water may look safe but it can be dangerous; teaching your child to recognise and keep away from dangers is an important part of STA Learn to Swim Series. Your child may swim well in the warm local indoor pool, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they'll be as confident or as able to swim in other more unfamiliar situations.

3. Go together

An adult should always supervise younger children. Local Authority swimming pools usually have restrictions on how many young children can accompany one adult; if visiting a new venue it's advisable to check the Centre's policy if you have more than two young children. Swimming is a family activity, so go together with family and friends.

2. Take safety advice

Your STA swimming teacher will teach your child the safety and hygiene rules for the pool, and most swimming pools have pictorial signs indicating these rules as well as lifeguards who would be happy to explain them. When visiting other venues it is always sensible to make yourself familiar with their safety and hygiene recommendations.

4. Learn to help

You may be able to help yourself, your family and others if you know what to do in an emergency. STA provides a variety of courses from a short duration Resuscitation Certificate to full First Aid and Lifeguard qualifications. More information is available from our website www.sta.co.uk.

Getting young children into aquatic activities and helping them develop this as a lifelong activity has always been, and continues to be, a key priority for STA.

We believe the best way to do this is to create safe environments in which young children can be introduced to the water whilst having fun; and so we have created the exciting STARFISH swimming series in association with Huggies® Little Swimmers®.

The STARFISH series brings together our considerable expertise in infant swimming and water safety, and offers a progressive aquatic awareness programme for young children from 0 to 2 years-old by combining a flexible mix of lessons and activities with free play.

Visit www.sta.co.uk for more tips on baby and pre-school swimming.

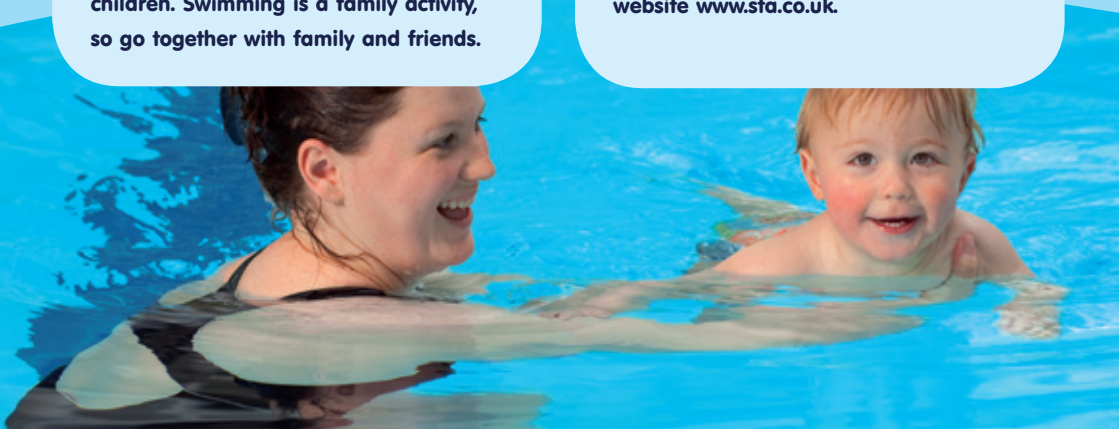


So what is the STA all about? Swimming for Fun, Health, and Safety!

Fun All STA trained swimming teachers know that learning to swim should be fun; it's the best way to learn, and doing it through our STARFISH series is great fun.

Health Swimming keeps the body fit and healthy, and helps fight the health risks of childhood obesity and an inactive lifestyle. Children who keep active tend to do better academically too.

Safety The STARFISH series places an emphasis on safety in the water. Learning how to behave in and around water is an important part of learning to be safe near water.



A swimming session with your baby can be a special way to spend time together, but if it's something you're doing for the first time, it can seem daunting. All you need is a little bit of know-how and a boost of confidence, for a great bonding experience for you and your baby.



Why swimming is good for baby and good for you

- It's a great workout: gentle exercise like swimming will help you get back in shape after pregnancy.
- It's a great bonding experience: teaching your baby how to swim at an early age can be an experience that helps you strengthen your natural bond with baby.
- It's a great way to get Dad's involved too.
- It's great for baby – swimming helps babies move on their own, and develop muscles, getting them ready for crawling and walking.
- Swimming can also have a positive impact on sleeping and eating patterns for babies.
- It's also a great social activity, for your baby too, where you can both meet and make new friends.

And you can take your baby swimming at any age. The Department of Health says that there's no need to wait until your baby has had their immunisations.

Please go to www.dh.gov.uk for more information.



Start off by having a splash around with your baby in the bath. It'll help get your little one used to the water, build your confidence and give you an idea of what to expect when you're in the pool. Once you're in the bath, take things step by step, trying one thing at a time. If you're feeling nervous, get your partner or a friend to be close to hand.



Give some of the ideas below a try:

- Sit with your knees up with baby resting on your legs, and gently splash water on his tummy. Sing or talk to him to make him feel relaxed.
- If he likes this, turn baby around so his head is on your chest. With your hands under his head, let him float with his ears submerged.
- Try introducing a bath toy at this point – you can bring this along to the pool to play with later.
- Move baby forwards and backwards in zigzags, giving plenty of praise and cuddles to keep him relaxed.
- Keep moving; to give baby plenty of sensations and exercise his muscles, keep him moving.





The next step is to find the right pool for your swimming session.

There are a few things to keep in mind when choosing which pool to visit, such as the right temperature, the right depth, changing facilities etc. Log onto www.littleswimmers.co.uk where you can find your nearest baby friendly approved pool.



So now you're all set to take the plunge! Remember that if you feel relaxed and happy, baby will too.

Now you're at the pool:

- Lay baby down on the poolside, and get into the pool first, lifting him in once you're in.

Once you've found a pool:

- Try a dry run: this way you can check out the pool and find out exactly what you'll need (eg a changing mat, coins for the locker, parking etc) and that way there will be fewer surprises on the day!
- Go during off peak times if you can, that way there will be less people in the pool and more room for you and baby. It's also worth asking a fellow mum to come along with her baby.
- Get your baby bag packed the night before with all the essentials; nappies, wet wipes, cream, baby clothes and towels. Make sure you have a proper swim nappy like Huggies® Little Swimmers.



- Cuddle baby in the pool, moving around slowly with your feet firmly on the floor, bounce him up and down to get him used to the sensation of water.
- Repeat the things you did in the bath: it'll be familiar to him and will make him more relaxed. You'll know straight away if he's enjoying himself; if he seems cold or unhappy, it might be time to dry off and try again another time.
- If he seems like he's enjoying himself, try moving him back to front and front to back.
- Remember, lots of smiles, kisses and cuddles! This, with plenty of eye contact, will make baby feel happy and reassured.

And don't forget your own stuff! A top tip is to wear your swimming costume under your clothes, which will save you the hassle of changing when you get to the pool.



Try and keep your first few trips to the pool relatively short, until both you and baby are confident in the water; start off with 10 to 15 minutes and build up to around 35 minutes at the most. **And it's worth timing your trip in between feeds and well before he is due a sleep.**



Now you've started, keep it up! Not only will it get you out of the house, it's a great way to exercise with baby and make friends. Now that you and baby are confident, there are plenty of fun games you can try and the stronger your baby gets, the more adventurous he'll become.

Some fun games to try:

- Bounce baby up and down using the same words like 'bouncy, bouncy' to build his confidence.
- If your baby can sit up, sit him on the side of the pool, sing Humpty Dumpty and when you get to the end, lift him into the water with a splash.



- Encourage baby to hold onto you and splash with his feet.
- Sit him on a float and zoom him around the pool.

For more tips and advice on having fun in the pool with your baby, and more on the four step plan log onto www.littleswimmers.co.uk



When you're having a great time splashing around the pool, the last thing you want to worry about is an embarrassing accident! Thanks to Huggies® Little Swimmers®, you won't have to!

Unlike disposable nappies, Huggies® Little Swimmers® are made from a unique absorbent material that won't trap water and swell, like normal nappies. They also have special leak guards around the legs.

Huggies® Little Swimmers® come in four sizes, starting with extra small, which are perfect for newborn babies. They also come in bright colours with Disney Winnie the Pooh, Tigger and Nemo designs that will make your baby the cutest swimmer in the pool!



For more information on Huggies® Little Swimmers®, visit www.littleswimmers.co.uk

Water safety on holiday abroad

As you will probably spend a lot of your holiday around the swimming pool or on the beach, please follow our tips below to help ensure that your time in and around the water goes swimmingly!



- Take a few minutes with your family to familiarise yourselves with the pool in your hotel or apartments at the beginning of your holiday. Many swimming pools abroad are not designed in the same way as in the UK and may have unusual features so ensure that you check the layout and the depth of the pool before you or your family get in.
- It is unlikely that the pool will have a lifeguard, so please check your pool information board and observe the pool rules.
- Children must be supervised at all times in and around the pool.
- Most hotel or apartment swimming pools are not suitable for safe poolside diving. Please observe any 'No Diving' signs. Never be tempted to jump or dive from bridges, rocks or other features around the pool.
- Familiarise yourself with what you should do in the event of an emergency and make sure that you know what hours the pool is in operation.
- If the evening entertainment in your hotel is near the swimming pool, be extra vigilant with children and never swim at night.
- Ensure that you familiarise yourself with the flag warning system in place on the beach. Make sure that you know what the flags mean, especially those that may tell you when and where it is dangerous to swim.
- Be aware of local conditions; tides, winds and currents can make even the safest beach hazardous. Also, please ensure that you are aware of any 'zoned' areas that are marked out for watersports.



basic life support for babies under 1 year of age

We have already mentioned drowning, but respiratory problems are common with young children especially choking on small toys etc.; placing objects into the mouth is a natural instinct with youngsters, they may have found something that tastes good! If you think your baby has stopped breathing for any reason the guidelines below follow the current recommended procedures for treating unresponsive babies:

Keep this leaflet safe and make sure you know what to do in case of an emergency – your child's life may depend on it!



Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3

Basic Life Support

- D Check for Danger**
Ensure safety of the rescuer and casualty
- R Check the casualty for a response (Fig 1)**
If they respond, get help: if no response 'shout for help' and...
- A Open the Airway (Fig 2)**
Head tilt and chin lift; be aware of the danger of over extending the neck
- B Check Normal Breathing (Fig 3)**
Look, listen and feel for up to 10 seconds; if they are breathing, support on their side to allow drainage of vomit just in case they are sick; it is recommended to place a blanket or some other padding behind the back to assist with the support.

When to call for assistance

- If more than one person is present, one should start resuscitation, the other should go for help immediately.
- If only one person is present perform one minute of resuscitation before going for help, it may be possible with a young child to take the casualty with you as you go for help.



Fig 4

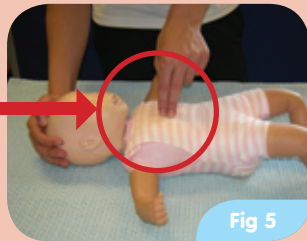


Fig 5



Fig 6



Fig 7



Fig 8

Not Breathing

1 Give Five Initial Rescue Breaths (Fig 4)

Each breath should make the chest rise. Ensure head tilt and chin lift. Do not over extend the neck, place your mouth over the casualty's mouth and nose, blow steadily for about 1 second, do not over inflate.

If your rescue breaths do not make the chest rise as in normal breathing, give 30 chest compressions, then before your next attempt:

- Check the casualty's mouth and remove any visible obstruction.
- Re-check that there is adequate head tilt and chin lift.

2 Chest Compressions

Place two finger tips in the centre of the chest, compress the chest to about 1/3 of its depth, complete 30 chest compressions. (Fig 5).

3 Continue Resuscitation

With a cycle of 2 rescue breaths to 30 chest compressions until qualified help arrives, he/she shows signs of life or you become exhausted.

Note: if the casualty vomits during BLS quickly turn the casualty on to the side to remove vomitus. If you can see an obvious obstruction inside the mouth, use your finger to hook it out carefully. Always re-check breathing and continue rescue breathing if necessary.

Choking

1 Back Blows (Fig 6 & 7)

Give up to five blows between the shoulder blades with the palm of your fingers. If the obstruction is still not cleared:

2 Chest Thrusts (Fig 8)

Use two fingers on the chest and give up to 5 chest thrusts. If the obstruction is still not cleared:

3 Repeat Steps 1 and 2

Continue repeating the sequence, do not leave the infant at this stage.

If they become unconscious

Place the baby on a firm flat surface. Open the mouth and check for any obvious obstructions, check for breathing and if the baby is not breathing normally, attempt five rescue breaths. If unsuccessful after five attempts start chest compressions immediately to relieve the obstruction (see Basic Life Support). Check the mouth each time for obstructions before giving rescue breaths. Continue CPR for approximately one minute before phoning for an ambulance.

STA runs courses on Paediatric First Aid – visit www.sta.co.uk for one near you.

"STA does not advise that these techniques are carried out by untrained personnel, and does not accept any responsibility for any accidents or misadventure caused through following the guidance contained. Official training courses are provided and STA advises that all parents attend one to learn, and be certified as competent, in the administration of these techniques."

Don't take our word for it

Here's what some Mums have said about swimming
with their baby...

“

**I love the closeness I share with Charlie in the pool.
Seeing him giggle and have fun really fills my heart!**

Wendy and Charlie (8 months)

**Nothing will prepare you for the enjoyment you get
seeing them so happy in the water.**

Mover and Jack (7 months)

”

For more information, tips and advice log onto
www.littleswimmers.co.uk

YOUR LOCAL



PROVIDER IS:

For more water safety advice contact:

STA, Anchor House, Birch Street,
Walsall, West Midlands WS2 8HZ

Tel: +44 (0)1922 645097

Fax: +44 (0)1922 720628

E-mail: sta@sta.co.uk

www.sta.co.uk

www.starfishswimming.org

