



Department of  
Developmental Disabilities

Office of MUI/Registry Unit

John R. Kasich, Governor  
John L. Martin, Director

## Health & Welfare Alert #36-09-13

### Bathtub Drowning

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The purpose of this Alert is to heighten the awareness of families and employees to the potential for bathtub drowning within the DD system. Drowning deaths are preventable and supervision is the key. This Alert provides some interesting facts and discusses how to prevent these tragic incidents.

#### Did You Know?

- ❖ According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, for 2005-2009, there was an average of 3,533 fatal unintentional drowning incidences in the U.S.
- ❖ Drowning is one of the leading causes of death in 1-4 year olds.
- ❖ For every child that drowns, another 4 are hospitalized and 16 receive emergency care for near-drowning.
- ❖ Nearly 80% of people who die from drowning are males.
- ❖ A majority of bathtub drowning victims drown during a brief (less than 5 minutes) lapse in supervision.
- ❖ Children may drown in as little as an inch or two of water.
- ❖ Non-fatal drowning can cause brain damage which results in long-term disabilities.
- ❖ For persons with seizure disorders, drowning is the most common cause of unintentional injury/death, with the bathtub being the site of highest drowning risk.
- ❖ Bathtub drowning occurs because of a lack of adult supervision. Adult supervision means direct visual contact without other distracting activities.

- ❖ A person will lose consciousness 2 minutes after submersion with irreversible brain damage occurring in 4 to 6 minutes.

### **Prevention Equals Adult Supervision**

In the last three years Ohio has averaged three unintentional drowning deaths involving individuals served. In all cases lack of adult supervision was a cause and contributing factor.

- ❖ At risk children or adults should never be left unattended in the bathtub for any reason.
- ❖ If an individual has a seizure disorder provide 1:1 supervision around any potential water source (bathtubs, swimming pools, beaches, rivers/lakes/ponds,
- ❖ If an individual has a seizure disorder etc. Always assure that appropriate medications are given as prescribed.
- ❖ Don't run to answer the phone.
- ❖ Don't check to see who is at the door.
- ❖ Don't leave siblings or unfamiliar caretakers to watch individuals.
- ❖ Don't rely on bathtub seats or rings. They create a false sense of security for the parent or caregiver.
- ❖ Get all of your supplies (i.e. towels, clothing, hygiene products etc.) ready before entering the bathroom.

**For questions or comments regarding the above Alert, please contact the MUI/Registry Unit at (614) 995-3810.**

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