

Prevention

Tremendous strides have been taken in the prevention of cerebral damage after head injury in children. New developments are directed toward the prevention of cellular injury or the primary insult. The greatest benefit lies in the prevention of head injuries. Nurses can exert a valuable influence on prevention of children's head injuries through education. Preventable head injuries occur because unnecessary risks go unchecked. Inadequate supervision combined with children's natural sense of curiosity and exploration can lead to lethal results. Nurses are in the unique position of influencing caregivers in terms of growth and development. Banning the use of infant walkers is an example. This equipment does not help develop motor skills and places infants at risk for head and neck injuries from falls, especially down steps. Public education coupled with legislative support can aid in the prevention of childhood injuries. (For extensive discussions of childhood injuries and prevention, see [Chapters 9, 11, 12, 14, and 15](#). See also [Childhood Mortality, Chapter 1](#).)

Submersion Injury

Submersion injury is a major cause of unintentional injury related death in children 1 to 19 years old, with the highest rate occurring in the 0 to 4 year age group ([Weiss, 2010](#)). The term *submersion injury* has replaced *near-drowning* to include any person who experiences distress from submersion or immersion in liquid that either results in death (drowning) or survival at least 24 hours after submersion (near-drowning) ([Weiss, 2010](#)). Most cases of submersion are accidental, usually involving children who are helpless in water, such as inadequately attended children in or near swimming pools or infants in bathtubs; small children who fall into ponds, streams, and flooded excavations; occupants of pleasure boats who fail to wear life preservers; children who have diving accidents; and children who are able to swim but overestimate their endurance. Accidental submersion injury occurs more commonly in toddlers, males, and African Americans ([Nasrullah and Muazzam, 2011](#)).

Submersion injury can take place in any body of liquid, and sites of drowning are important to consider for preventive education.