



WATER SAFETY ADVICE FOR MUMS & DADS

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Water Safety Advice for STA for Mums & Dads

Our children are our most precious gifts and as parents we want to make sure that they are always happy, healthy and safe; making sure they are confident and safe in and around the water is an important part of this.

Getting young children into aquatic activities and helping them develop this 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 a safe environment in which young children can be introduced to the water while still having fun. Our STARFISH swimming programme, which has been created for babies aged 0-2years, provides a fun, healthy and safe learning experience.



Fun

All STA teachers know that swimming should be FUN. Learning through the STA STARFISH series is a great way to learn whilst having fun! Teaching your baby to swim at an early age also helps you strengthen your natural bond with your baby – and it's a great way for dads to get involved too. It's also a fun social activity for you and your baby, and gives you both the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends.

Health

Swimming keeps the body fit and healthy. Baby swimming is also proven to help even the tiniest babies develop physically, emotionally and mentally. It can also have a really positive impact on babies sleeping and eating patterns. Plus it's a great gentle way for mums and dads to work out too.

Safety

The STA STARFISH programme incorporates water safety from the very first lesson. Learning how to spot the dangers and how to behave in and around the water is an important part of learning how to be safe. Follow STANley's Water Safety Code, and when your children are old enough, make sure they know the code and always follow it.

The STARFISH series is the first step in the STA's International Learn to Swim Programme, which offers a wide range of development swimming and safety skills to ensure lifelong participation. For more information on baby and pre-school swimming visit www.sta.co.uk

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



Dave Candler
STA, CEO



STARFISH





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Swimming with your baby can be a special way to spend time together. If its your first time at the pool it can also be a little daunting, so here we have put together some expert advice to ensure your experience is a confident and positive one.

TOP TIPS

- To stop baby getting cold whilst swimming why not invest in a Konfidence Babywarma pool wetsuit?
See www.konfidence.co.uk for further details
- Baby should not be fed for one hour before swimming to help avoid little accidents in the pool.
- Take a favourite bath time toy such as Konfidence Floating Flashing Blinkies along to the pool to play with, having a familiar toy will help baby relax and enjoy their first swimming session.





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Step 1 Getting Started

Having a splash around with your baby in the bath is the best way to get your little one used to the water and to build confidence. Water is a natural environment for a newborn, and nurturing this natural affinity to water with fun bath time activities will make the transition to the swimming pool much easier when the time comes.

Some games and activities to try at bath time:

- Support baby and make eye contact to ensure baby feels secure, encourage baby to splash their hands and kick their legs.
- Introducing toys will make bath time fun; sponge toys and watering cans can be used to get baby used to having water sprinkled over their body.
- Singing songs or rhymes is a great way to engage and relax baby.

REMEMBER: NEVER LEAVE BABY UNATTENDED IN THE BATH



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Step 2 Finding the right pool

When the time is right you will want to continue your aquatic journey with your baby in the swimming pool.

The Department of Health currently advise that your baby does not need any immunisations before they go swimming. Although, it is advisable to check with your GP, or other health professional, that they are happy for you to take your baby swimming before the first visit.

Here are a few questions you might like to ask to ensure your chosen pool is suitable for you and your baby:

What is the temperature of the water?

The water and air temperature will need to be higher for babies than for general swimming - at least 30°C (or 32°C for babies 3 months or younger) with air temperature being 1°C above the temperature of the water. If your pool is a lower temperature, we recommend you use a baby wetsuit like the Konfidence Babywama, which will keep them warm.

What depth is the water?

It is important that the water is shallow enough that you are able to stand comfortably to support your baby effectively.



Are baby changing facilities available?

Why not take along your own 'Roll and Go baby changer' for use on poolside or in the changing rooms? You will also need somewhere safe to place baby while you get changed.

If you are looking for swimming lessons there are some additional questions to be asked:

Is the teacher appropriately qualified?

Check that your teacher holds the STA Level 2 Award in Aquatic Teaching - Baby and Pre-School or equivalent.

Is the teacher appropriately insured?

Don't be afraid to ask your teacher for details.

Does the teacher come recommended by local parents?

Often personal recommendation is the best way to find a really good teacher.



What do I need to take with me?

Check with the swimming pool exactly what is required, but as a general rule you will need:

- A swim nappy. STA recommend the double nappy system; a waterproof swim nappy with a nappy cover over the top such as the Konfidence AquaNappy and NeoNappy cover.
- A towel to wrap your baby in whilst walking from the pool to the changing rooms to prevent them getting cold, as well as a towel to dry baby with after their swim
- Change for the locker.
- You may wish to take your own changing mat.
- Clean clothes, nappies, cream and wet wipes for afterwards.
- A drink or snack for after the swim.



Baby swimming essentials: Konfidence Babywarma, AquaNappy and Neo Nappy are all available as individual colours and co-ordinated sets at www.konfidence.co.uk

Step 3 Take the plunge

Getting baby into the pool:

Ask a friend to hold baby whilst you get into the water, alternatively, take a towel or the chlorine resistant 'Roll and Go baby changer' to place on the poolside - lay baby on the towel / changer whilst you climb in. Baby can then be lifted into the water when you're ready.

Activities to try in the water:

- Cradle baby close to your body and move slowly around the pool with your feet firmly on the floor to familiarise baby with the water; if baby appears relaxed and happy gently rock them from side to side.
- Take a familiar toy for baby to play with, it will help baby relax, watering cans are brilliant for watering limbs and tummies and 'catching the rain'. Balls and floating toys are great too, and can be chased around the swimming pool.

Step 4 Make a splash

Now that you and your baby are gaining confidence in the water, why not join a STARFISH baby and pre-school swimming class? It's a great opportunity to make new friends, and join in with lots of fun songs, games and activities under the guidance of a trained professional. Many of our Swim Star Swim Schools offer STARFISH swimming lessons - see our website www.sta.co.uk for further information.



TOP TIP

Once you have found a suitable pool, why not visit in advance of your first session? You can check what you need and how long it takes to get there. This will help you feel relaxed and confident on the day - and if you are relaxed, baby will relax too!

REMEMBER

- Keep monitoring baby to ensure they are enjoying themselves and not getting too cold, it will be best to keep the first swimming sessions short perhaps only 10-15 minutes, building up to approximately 30 minutes over the coming weeks.
- Don't forget that if you relax and enjoy yourself in the water, baby will too. Lots of praise, encouragement and smiles along with eye contact will help baby to quickly relax and feel at ease in the water.

STAnley's Water Safety Code



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's International Learn to Swim Programme. 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.

Take Safety Advice

Your STA swimming teacher will teach your child the safety and hygiene rules for the pool. When visiting other venues it is always sensible to make yourself familiar with their safety and hygiene recommendations by observing signage and following lifeguard instructions.

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.

Learn How 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

Swim Star Swim School recommendation

STA's Swim Star Swim School programme is a first of its kind, and demonstrates that swim schools signed up to the programme are committed to providing excellent standards of teaching and pledge to maintain them through the globally renowned International Learn to Swim Programme.

To find your local Swim Star Swim School, please visit www.sta.co.uk



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