

Whilst secondary drowning is relatively rare, it is a serious health condition that can be fatal.

Signs to look out for following a water incident:

The symptoms that the patient may experience are linked to lung injury and reduced oxygen in the blood these include:

- Dizziness
- Persistent coughing
- Nausea
- Sleepiness
- Difficulty breathing or speaking
- Chest pain
- Unusual behaviour

What to do if you suspect secondary drowning

- **Seek emergency medical assistance**
- **Try to keep the patient calm as this can help to relax the airways**

Useful tips for parents and carers

Always encourage your child to cough and clear their airways following a water incident as this will help to prevent development of damage to the airways.



Following a water incident, dress your child in loose fitting clothing that will allow you to check their breathing through the night.

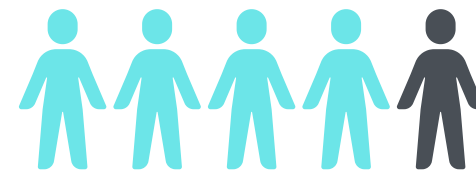
More information
www.rlss.org.uk
www.openswim.org.uk

Healthy Schools Team
Tel: 0161 9468270
www.manchesterhealthyschools.co.uk

Open Water Safety

In 44% of all fatal incidents the person had no intention of entering the water.

**2 in 3 fatalities happen in inland waters
(rivers, canals, reservoirs).**



Males are four times as likely to drown than females.

45% of children ages 7-11 years cannot swim 25m unaided.

More people die from drowning in the UK and Ireland than from domestic fires or cycling accidents !

Every year people drown both at home and on holiday because they don't take simple precautions.

Cold Water Shock Syndrome

Cold water shock is triggered in water temperatures lower than 15°C (the average temperature of UK and Irish water is 12°C!!) So even in summer, the water temperature is cold enough to cause cold water shock.

What happens?

There are three stages

- A gasp of breath
- Rapid breathing (hyperventilation)
- Blood pressure goes up as your body tries to keep your blood warm

You have a short time scale to get out before you will experience swim failure (Strength and muscle failure).

How can you reduce your risk?



2nd Keep calm, raise your hand

1st Roll on to your back

3rd If you can, swim to an exit or something to help you float



Do not enter the water if you see someone struggling: **Dial 999** and shout for **help**.

It's colder than it looks, just because it is hot and sunny doesn't mean the water is.

What to wear when swimming in open water:

A wetsuit

Brightly coloured swim cap

Secondary drowning

While most drowning incidents take place immediately after falling into water (where the patient naturally gasps and gulps in water), secondary drowning occurs after the patient has been rescued.

Secondary drowning is caused by the airways opening up and letting in water. This water then builds up in the lungs causing breathing difficulties.

Symptoms do not happen immediately after the incident in the water but tend to occur at least an hour afterwards, and up to 24 hours afterwards.