

Submersion Injury



Whether you know it as secondary drowning, dry drowning, delayed drowning or the updated term, **Submersion Injury** we collectively need to know what to look out for if we suspect that a child has inhaled or aspirated some water.

When a child is well supervised in the water with an adult within reaching distance the risk of submersion injury is very low, but it still can happen. You may notice coughing and spluttering immediately following a child inhaling water, this can often clear the lungs in the same way as coughing helps when food or drink "goes down the wrong way" If this coughing and spluttering is prolonged over more than a few minutes immediate medical attention should be sought.

It is important to look out for the following signs or symptoms for a period of 24 hours after you suspect inhalation of water. The most serious signs are those of **Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome**:

- severe shortness of breath
- rapid, shallow breathing
- tiredness, drowsiness or confusion
- feeling faint

If you notice any of these, call 999 immediately.

Other signs to look out for include:

- Persistent coughing, or wheezing
- Difficulty breathing - including flaring of nostrils, the tummy sucking under their ribs, sinking above the collar bone or under the breastbone
- Blueish skin colour
- Chest pain
- Extreme fatigue or lethargy
- Confusion
- Difficulty speaking or communicating as normal
- Vomiting
- Foam at mouth or nose
- Worsening symptoms

You know your child best, and if they seem not quite themselves but not displaying any of the signs above following inhalation of water or potential aspiration of water, seek medical advice.

Swimming Buddies Safety Team