

Pool Drains: A hazard you may not have considered

by Dr. Delia Chiamonte, [Baltimore Health Examiner](#)



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Do you have a healthy respect for pool drains? You probably have considered various pool dangers, but you might not have thought of this one.

A tremendous amount of pressure can be generated by a pool drain. If hair or body parts become entrapped, people can drown even as rescuers try desperately to free them.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, 117 body or hair entrapments occurred in pool or hot tub drains between 1990 and 2004, almost a quarter of them resulting in death. The victims ranged in age from 22 months to 89 years old, although most were older children between 8 and 16 years old.

The danger occurs when the drain is completely occluded by the body, when a hand or foot gets caught, or when long hair becomes entangled as it is swept into the drain. Even necklaces and swim trunks have become entrapped. Several children have actually become disemboweled as they sat on a drain in a wading pool.

Older drains or those with faulty or missing covers pose the greatest hazard. Newer pools and spas may have covers or safety features that are designed to minimize the danger of entrapment.

The chance that this will happen to you or someone you love is minimal. But since this tragedy is so easy to avoid, simply by staying away from pool drains, it is worth considering as the summer pool season starts.

Be aware. Inform your kids.

Happy swimming.

- Dr. C

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