



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®

*The Lifeguarding Experts*

## Immunize your child against drowning

The World Health Organization (WHO) has released its first report dedicated exclusively to drowning, titled *Global Report on Drowning: Preventing a Leading Killer*. Among the findings: drowning is one of the 10 leading causes of death for children and young people in every region of the world. In Canada, it's the second leading cause of preventable death for children under the age of 10.

Globally, an estimated 372,000 people drown each year in what the WHO describes as a serious but neglected public health threat. While the impact from drowning is significant compared to other public health challenges, there are no broad, organized global strategies for prevention.

### Drowning is preventable

The report calls for both global and local communities to work together to introduce strategies aimed at promoting water safety and drowning prevention.

The Lifesaving Society, an organization recognized by the WHO as the leader in drowning prevention and research in Canada, actively participates in many of the recommendations identified in the report. These include data collection and research; promoting prevention strategies such as four-sided fencing; and drowning prevention education programs.

Teaching school-age children basic swimming, water safety and safe rescue skills is one of the Ten Actions to Prevent Drowning specifically identified by the report. If you would like to take steps for the safety of your family, find out about *Swim to Survive*, a school-based program by the Lifesaving Society that teaches children three critical skills needed to survive an unexpected fall into water.

“Teaching school-age children survival swimming skills can have a lifelong immunization effect against drowning,” says Barbara Byers, the public education director for the Society. “It’s one of the most effective tools we have to help prevent drowning.”

The program is available across Canada, and similar programs are being piloted in countries like Bangladesh where drowning rates are very high, especially among children.

More information about water safety is available at [www.lifesavingsociety.com](http://www.lifesavingsociety.com).