

# More That Matters: Water Safety & Drowning Prevention

With Dr. Martha Whyte

Clay (00:00):

We're back, and we're diving into Water Safety on More That Matters.

Diane (00:14):

Welcome back to another episode of More That Matters. When it comes to our children, there's a never-ending list of things we do to keep them healthy and safe, especially when they're around water. With us today is Dr. Martha Whyte, the regional medical director for Region Seven, to discuss two important topics, Water Safety and Drowning Prevention. Doctor, hello, and thank you so much for joining us. Very important topics, and we need to let our listeners know what is important and why these topics are so important. So let's start off, let's start at talking about drowning and how common unfortunately it is.

Dr. Whyte (01:01):

Well drowning, unfortunately, in Louisiana, you know, we have a lot of waterways-

Clay (01:04):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (01:05):

... and we have a lot of people with pools because it's hot around here. So it is a very common, uh, problem that we deal with in Louisiana. We have the highest, uh, drowning rates in the country, and it is actually our third reason for death for children from 1 to 14.

Diane (01:23):

I did not realize that, Clay, did you? I did not know that.

Clay (01:25):

No, I did not, yeah.

Diane (01:26):

Mm-hmm.

Clay (01:27):

So, it's interesting, you know, in, in context this, with this airing this summer, uh, I was telling Emma a moment ago that it's.... We've had some very tragic incidents of drownings, uh, both by a combination of children who were in areas where there weren't adults around, and then people who were not as equipped to be in water as maybe they should have been. And Di did ask about how

common it is. So to what do you attribute a spike in the number of drownings in, in South Louisiana especially?

Dr. Whyte (01:58):

Well, I think, um, a lot of parents are... You know, in our homes we have a lot of two working parents, or if there's a single parent, of course, they're working. So a lot of children have less supervision. And, you know, we are so... It's so hot that people are trying to find any way they can to cool off during the summer.

Clay (02:18):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (02:19):

And we have access to a lot of different types of water. When you're talking about big bodies of water, be it pool, um, rivers, lakes, bayous. Um, we have a lot of places where people can try to take a quick dip. Um, you know, of course, we have other ways that babies drown in our homes, like in bathtubs where they're not monitored.

Diane (02:39):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (02:39):

But I think a lot of it has to do with... We have, uh, kids that are not as quite as supervised because parents are working, or, or maybe they're tired from working all the time, and so, maybe they're not quite as, uh, focused. So we really wanna encourage parents when their children are at the pool or at the river, if you're at the lake, that you are doing all the things you can to protect them and keep them safe.

Diane (03:07):

And, and, you know, we've, we've heard before, Dr. Whyte, that, that drowning can be very silent.

Clay (03:14):

Mm-hmm.

Diane (03:14):

That just seems kind of... That seems odd.

Clay (03:17):

Yeah.

Diane (03:17):

But that is absolutely-

Clay (03:18):

Because you expect the violence-

Diane (03:19):

Yes.

Clay (03:19):

... you know, slapping about of water.

Diane (03:21):

Yeah, you absolutely do.

Clay (03:22):

Yeah.

Diane (03:22):

And that just is kind of a, an odd combination of words, but as Clay said, that is absolutely the case. So what... I, I think we need to just talk about the, the, the signs of someone drowning since it can be, quote-unquote silent, Dr. Whyte.

Dr. Whyte (03:39):

Sometimes there are no signs. Sometimes it's just-

Diane (03:42):

Oh.

Dr. Whyte (03:42):

... a child jumps into a pool, and the next thing you look around and you don't see him, you find them on the bottom of the pool.

Diane (03:49):

Mm-hmm.

Clay (03:49):

Man.

Dr. Whyte (03:51):

There are times when perhaps they're playing around and, and being silly with each other, and they're splashing around, and maybe they get dunked under, and they did it so quickly they didn't have a chance to take a breath, and then they get in trouble. Um, where you can, perhaps hear- you heard that splashing. And then sometimes, of course, kids get panicked, and they'll splash and yell, help. Um, but you have to be paying attention, 'cause it can be very noisy at a pool or in a lake, you know, around, you know, where there are a lot of people.

Diane (04:24):

And when you're with friends, sometimes you think, "Oh, he's just kidding. He's just kidding. There's nothing wrong."

Clay (04:28):

Right.

Diane (04:28):

"There's not..." You know, not a threat of drowning. You don't... When you're kids, you don't even think that, you don't even consider that. But they're like, "Oh, he's just, he's just kidding. He's, he is fine. There's no problem."

Clay (04:39):

Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (04:39):

You even have those kids that scream help as a joke, and you have to really-

Diane (04:44):

Yes.

Dr. Whyte (04:44):

... teach them-

Diane (04:44):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (04:44):

... never say-

Clay (04:44):

Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (04:44):

... those words unless you really, really need help, because we want people to pay attention to them.

Clay (04:50):

You know, I just wanna say this, that in many communities across Louisiana, whether it is the YMCA or a, a park or recreation, uh, division of a parish or some nonprofit with certified trained people, during the summer, there is a concerted effort by these organizations to teach children how to swim at no cost. And I just think because there is water in so many places around us, people should avail themselves of those opportunities if you can, because I cannot imagine what this would be like as a parent or as a sibling or, or whomever. And if it can be prevented by actually teaching a child or an

adult how to swim, I think you take advantage of that because as you were talking about this, Dr. Whyte, I can't imagine the trauma of, of discovering your child, uh, at the bottom of a swimming pool or something. And, and again, there are dollars invested in saying, "Hey, let-" Especially in poor communities, "take advantage of these things so that we can avoid this tragedy." As someone said to me, this is one of the more avoidable ways-

Diane (06:01):

Yes.

Clay (06:01):

... to die in, in, in our-

Diane (06:04):

Yeah.

Clay (06:04):

... country as anything else. Would you have any comments about that, Dr. Whyte?

Dr. Whyte (06:08):

I, I do. I have a quick story to tell you. There- there's a story about the Shreveport Seven, and they were seven teenagers. Um, parents were with them. They had a large group, um, together, they were at the river, and they were just staying, you know, kind of knee to waist deep in their water. And the problem was that none of them could swim, and the parents couldn't swim.

Diane (06:36):

Oh.

Dr. Whyte (06:36):

So, um, there was literally no one in the group, even as large as it was, that wa- that was a good swimmer. And the... This is, um, a very important point to make in these waterways, lakes, rivers, creeks, anything, you never know what the bottom is like. And they were playing around, and they went boom, off a, off a ledge. And then they... instead of being waist length, you know, waist deep in water, they were underwater.

Diane (07:11):

Oh my gosh.

Dr. Whyte (07:12):

And, um, they were trying to help each other, and they were struggling, and then the parents didn't know what to do, and they were trying to help and call n- for help, and all of them drowned.

Diane (07:21):

Oh, no.

Dr. Whyte (07:24):

And so, um, that became an impetus for this area for all of North Louisiana actually, to really, um, put in place free swimming lessons every year. And they are, um, really meant for people in, in need who can't afford to pay for swimming lessons, um, and they fill rapidly. But there is always, um, a push to try to get as many people, um, taught how to swim. And if you don't know how to swim, please avail yourself of swim lessons. And however you can get them, you can get them at low cost. A lot of times they're not expensive.

Clay (08:05):

Right.

Dr. Whyte (08:06):

And, um, it's so important. You don't have to be the strongest swimmer, but if you can keep yourself above water till someone can help you-

Diane (08:15):

Right.

Dr. Whyte (08:15):

... that's so important. And, you know, we, this community, they, they actually celebrate those seven every year.

Diane (08:24):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (08:24):

Um, Cedric Glover, who's been one of our representatives-

Clay (08:27):

Yeah. Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (08:27):

... has taken that on as his, you know, one of his passion projects where he doesn't want them forgotten. He wants, um, uh, them to be an impetus to save more children. So you're absolutely right. Being able to swim and not being able to save your children is so, is so terrifying.

Clay (08:53):

Could not imagine.

Dr. Whyte (08:53):

Um-

Diane (08:53):

[inaudible 00:08:54].

Dr. Whyte (08:54):

And I think, um, if you don't know how to swim, making sure that you have someone with you if you're taking your child to swim, because we teach our kids, we give them swim lessons, and sometimes we haven't taken them. And if... I encourage you, when you give your children swim lessons to take them as well, but if not, at least to make sure you have someone with you that is, is a good swimmer.

Diane (09:18):

That's great advice. Taking your children, you make sure you can swim as well, because that happens, as you said so many times, Dr. Whyte, there is something that happens as a tragedy, well, could be a tragedy with a young person, and then an adult jumps in, maybe the young person survives, but the adult drowns trying to sa- we hear about this, Clay.

Clay (09:37):

I- I've heard a similar story-

Diane (09:39):

Uh, yes.

Clay (09:39):

... with, with with-

Diane (09:39):

Uh.

Clay (09:40):

... friends of mine.

Diane (09:41):

Mm-hmm.

Clay (09:41):

When I was in high school, um, they were just, like you said, they were fishing, uh, near one of the, the spillways and the, there was, it was, uh, four of them. And, um, him, his little sister, his mother and his father, and little girl falls in, mom jumps in.

Diane (09:57):

Mm-hmm.

Clay (09:58):

Mom can't swim. Dad jumps in, dad can't swim. He got, he jumped in, but where he was, he was able to pull himself out and he watched-

Diane (10:05):

Right.

Clay (10:06):

... his family die.

Diane (10:08):

Oh my gosh.

Clay (10:08):

And again, I cannot-

Diane (10:09):

Mm-hmm.

Clay (10:10):

I... We've done a lot of these shows, and I cannot overstate the importance of people adhering to this one-

Diane (10:16):

Yes.

Clay (10:17):

... because some things ha- that happened in terms of sickness have a distance off like hurricanes when you learn, when we learned about COVID, there was a beginning stage, and we began to learn as it, the information about it spread. This is just one of those things that can happen like this. You're out at a pool.

Diane (10:33):

Yes.

Clay (10:34):

You're in a, on a waterway, and you never plan it. You're not trying to be negligent, but you are ill prepared to handle it.

Diane (10:39):

And as you said, Clay, it doesn't have to happen.

Clay (10:42):

Mm-hmm.



Diane (10:42):

And that's the whole point, Dr. Whyte, that we're talking about today. It... This doesn't... This is avoidable. And just because you're an adult, and you maybe not feel real comfortable-

Clay (10:51):

Sure.

Diane (10:52):

... you know, in a pool, do it for yourself and do it for-

Clay (10:55):

Yeah.

Diane (10:55):

... your family, for your friends. After all, you start your children on, water babies, you know-

Clay (11:00):

Mm-hmm.

Diane (11:00):

... you take them, get them used then whether they're, they're tadpoles and guppies and all that.

Clay (11:04):

Yeah.

Diane (11:05):

So there are steps, correct. Dr. Whyte? It doesn't have, doesn't happen all the time.

Clay (11:08):

You don't have to be Michael Phelps.

Diane (11:08):

Yeah. (laughs)

Clay (11:08):

You just can't, right? Yeah.

Diane (11:08):

But, but it's true.

Dr. Whyte (11:08):

Right.

Diane (11:12):

Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (11:13):

Well, my mom didn't know how to swim. And whenever we would go to Florida to Destin, we... I grew up in New Orleans. Whenever we'd go over to Destin, we spent a lot of time as her children teaching her how to float.

Diane (11:25):

Good. Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (11:26):

People there were like, "At least if you can float and keep your head above water-"

Diane (11:29):

Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (11:29):

... "you know, you'd be good because you just never know what's gonna happen."

Clay (11:33):

Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (11:34):

And, you know, one of the things I really wanna make clear is, you know, we have all these natural waterways that we're so blessed with in Louisiana, but we really don't know the topography of them.

Clay (11:45):

Right.

Dr. Whyte (11:45):

We don't know the currents. We don't know the... You know, where it gets deep and where it might be have a, whether you're on a shelf-

Clay (11:54):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (11:54):

... or not.

Diane (11:54):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (11:55):

And then actually, these seven were actually on a very large shelf. And so they were walking around playing football and they, they thought they were good, and then all of a sudden it was just like one of them fell off. And then before you-

Diane (12:06):

Oh gosh.

Dr. Whyte (12:06):

... knew it, they were all off.

Diane (12:07):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (12:09):

And, um, so we make sure that you are... Um, if you don't know how to swim, you wear a life jacket.

Clay (12:16):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (12:16):

If you are in that kind of water, that you have people around you that know how to swim, and that if you are a person who knows how to swim, that you, that you are watching those around you that, you know, we unfortunately, nowadays are always on our cell phones, and we like to-

Clay (12:35):

Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (12:36):

... or, you know, on those eBooks and-

Clay (12:37):

Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (12:38):

... you listening to music and it's easy to get distracted. Take shifts if you have friends with you, or... But make sure that there are a couple of you that are really focused on the water and on the people in the water. Any age in the water. Because even the best swimmers can get in trouble at times. So you wanna make sure you have somebody who's focused on those people that are in the water playing around having a good time.

Diane (13:04):

And again, you talk about people on party barges, you know, you're out having a good time. Maybe, you know, a little adult beverage-

Clay (13:11):

Yeah.

Diane (13:12):

... is, is involved too. Don't be afraid to say no.

Clay (13:15):

Yeah.

Diane (13:16):

Not gonna do it. Don't be afraid to wear a life jacket.

Clay (13:18):

Sure.

Diane (13:19):

If you're not comfortable in the way you, you just have to speak up, and be aware of what you need to do for yourself or your friends, for your, you know, the environment.

Clay (13:28):

That's really bad around here.

Diane (13:29):

Yes. Yeah.

Clay (13:30):

Really bad.

Diane (13:30):

It, it really is.

Clay (13:31):

On False River over-

Diane (13:33):

Mm-hmm.

Clay (13:33):

... in Pointe Coupee Parish on average, unfortunately, once a year, there's some kind of water tragedy or near tragedy-

Diane (13:37):

Mm-hmm.

Clay (13:38):

... that involves people being out there and alcohol being a part of the equation. Doc, I'd like to ask, what is dry drowning or secondary drowning?

Dr. Whyte (13:47):

Dry drowning, secondary drowning, that is when you inhale water. So it can be like quickly, like maybe someone dunked you in the pool and you aren't ready and you get a bunch of water and instead of it going down in into your esophagus, into your stomach, it goes into your, um, trachea and down into your lungs.

Clay (14:09):

Oh.

Dr. Whyte (14:10):

And sometimes it'll hit really quickly on your vocal cords, and they'll close, they'll, they'll try to protect your airway, and how tightly they close can be, um, deter... You know, is what's gonna turn, determine how dangerous it is for you.

Clay (14:27):

Wow.

Dr. Whyte (14:28):

Um, that is a, a sudden thing. And you will see a person start with that. If, if you've ever heard a creepy cough, you know, those, our children, if you have children, you've heard that kind of barking seal cough?

Clay (14:42):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (14:43):

That's stratus breath, that really loud breathing. That's what's called, that's when your, um, your airway is closed through your vocal cords. The tighter close they are, the less air you're getting in, correct? And so, they're gonna become fatigued because they're not getting enough oxygen to their brain, and they need emergency services. So you need to get them to a place where they can be taken care of. There is another part to that where maybe it wasn't such a large, like, hit to your vocal cords, and they don't automatically close. And so you get more into your lungs, and when that happens, you can get edema in your lungs and issues kind of a few hours out.

Dr. Whyte (15:28):

Those are the ones where you, you hear about someone who maybe had an issue when they were swimming or they, you know, maybe they didn't even realize, you know, maybe they choked a little bit on water 'cause they were playing around, or they dove in and, and had a little issue. Didn't think much of it. But if it got, if they got water into their lungs, those are the ones that a few hours later will wake up with a bad cough and they can't stop coughing. That is something also you wanna take seriously. A lot of times these will, um, you'll recover on your own, but you really need to have someone monitor you because they can progress to, uh, to death. And that's the... Those are the people you hear that were home after they were at the lake or the, or the pool. And they were, they died and they said, "Oh, they died from dry, dry drowning." That's what happened. They, they got it into their lungs that eventually caused inflammation and edema in their lungs, and they had consequences a few hours later. Does that make sense?

Diane (16:26):

Oh, absolutely.

Clay (16:27):

Mm-hmm.

Diane (16:28):

I guess I didn't even... Oh, I wasn't aware of this. I did not even know; I've never heard of dry drowning or secondary. So that is, that's pretty critical to keep in mind-

Clay (16:37):

Yeah.

Diane (16:37):

... as well, Clay.

Clay (16:39):

Yeah. Yeah. It's... And there's so much information about it, like you said-

Diane (16:42):

Mm-hmm.

Clay (16:42):

... you referenced earlier, a, a, a child in a bathtub or, or the fact that people don't believe that you could be in two feet of water and think-

Diane (16:50):

And drown, yeah.

Clay (16:50):

... "God, there's no chance. It's by my ankles or by my knees." And you could still end up having a situation where you drown. So it- it's, it isn't always about the depth of the water.

Dr. Whyte (16:59):

We've had babies even drown in mop buckets.

Diane (17:02):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (17:02):

Um, where-

Clay (17:02):

What?

Dr. Whyte (17:02):

... um, yeah, where their mom may have let the mop, good water bucket of water out, um, and the, the toddler, um, walks up to it and falls in and then can't get out-

Diane (17:18):

Mm-hmm.

Clay (17:18):

Never heard of it.

Dr. Whyte (17:18):

... because if you think they're... Yeah, it's not, it's not overly common because most moms are not gonna leave their mop, dirty mop bucket water out.

Clay (17:25):

Yeah. Yeah.

Diane (17:26):

Yeah, that's right.

Dr. Whyte (17:27):

But if you leave it, even if you haven't used it yet, and you walk away, you know, toddlers like to get into things.

Clay (17:32):

Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (17:33):

And they're quick, they get away from you pretty quickly.

Clay (17:35):

They do.

Dr. Whyte (17:36):

So making, making sure that you are keeping them out of anything that might, like, that is, is very important.

Diane (17:44):

That kind of leads to the bathtub safety-

Clay (17:46):

Right.

Diane (17:46):

... issue. So tips, I'm assuming you probably have plenty, you've seen plenty of, unfortunately, incidences that could happen because of bathtub-

Dr. Whyte (17:55):

So many-

Diane (17:56):

... just a little bit of bathtub water.

Dr. Whyte (17:58):

Right. There's so many things that can happen-

Diane (18:00):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (18:00):

... in a bathtub. And, um, we think just because the child can sit up on their own, that that means you can turn your back on them or walk out of the, the room to answer a phone, go grab your phone, you hear it ringing or something like that, go get a towel from the hallway closet. Um, children can... You know, young babies, young toddlers are... You know, they're top heavy. And if they slip and, you know, the, the tubs can be slippery. And even if you have a mat, that's one thing that will definitely help is something that, just like you have when you get older for your, maybe your grandmother, so they don't slip when they're standing in the, in the shower, something like that for your children so they don't slip or even a tub that you sit in your tub so that they're more secure.

Clay (18:51):

Mm-hmm.



Dr. Whyte (18:51):

And then staying with your children is very important. Keeping an eye on them. And the other thing is they like to play with handles. So I've seen a-

Clay (19:01):

Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (19:01):

... tremendous amou- number of burns up. I know it's not drowning, but it's still water safety, (laughs) um, making sure that you have the cover so that they cannot turn those handles, um, when you have your back turned-

Clay (19:12):

Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (19:12):

... even just for a minute and scald themselves. Unfortunately, I've seen some pretty severe burns from that.

Clay (19:18):

And doc, I, I also recommend for people who are taking care of elderly relatives or parents to think about the, the... I forget the name of them, but it's the, uh, resistance thing you put on the bottom of a tub, so it- it's a slip resistant, uh-

Dr. Whyte (19:35):

Right.

Clay (19:35):

... or footing, whatever at the bottom of a tub. So when someone stands, they can't fall hurt themselves and they're in the water and have no ability to stand and can drown in their own bathtub.

Dr. Whyte (19:46):

Yes, sir. And they used to have just kind of the bathmat that you stuck to the bottom.

Clay (19:51):

Yeah. Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (19:51):

But now they have everything from just even, like, little stickers that you stick on that-

Clay (19:56):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (19:57):

... um, various, you know, separation that stops them from slipping. And so, they're not quite as raised. Um, and they're, uh, nice as well. So there are a lot of things that are available that will help make that surface less slippery. And those are really important.

Clay (20:14):

What about CPR? If, if you are at a public pool or on the beach and you notice someone struggling and you get them out of the water, should a person who's not trained in CPR try it or what should they do?

Dr. Whyte (20:29):

So if someone is not breathing-

Clay (20:31):

Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (20:31):

... I think it's important to, um, check them for a pulse. And if they don't have a pulse to definitely start chest compressions.

Clay (20:38):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (20:39):

Um, chest compressions are way more important than breaths. A lot of people are not quite as comfortable with breathing into someone else's mouth. Um, especially nowadays, everybody's so aware of, um, infections. But it is important to make sure that they're getting good blood flow. And even if you don't do it perfectly, trying, um, is better than nothing. And you are not going to be at risk for doing that for someone if you don't do it correctly until, um, the professionals get there. So yes, I would say, um, try it. I would also really encourage everyone to become CPR, um, trained.

Clay (21:19):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (21:20):

You know, at, at some point in your life, someone around you is going to have an issue, be it whether you have a, a new baby or an elderly parent or grandparent. There are always issues. Or even just someone who has an accident, and, you know, you want to know safety and, and CPR, and they're easy to obtain those classes. You know, Red Cross provides them, the Heart Association provides them, most hospitals offer them frequently. Um, so please avail yourself at those because you'll feel so much more secure in knowing that you can help someone, um, if you're in that situation. And it really can save someone's life.

Diane (22:02):

And I know a lot of people probably in the past have... they've taken CPR courses or classes and maybe even in college or what have you. I, for one, I took it many years ago.

Clay (22:12):

Mm-hmm.

Diane (22:12):

But I don't remember.

Clay (22:13):

Yeah.

Diane (22:14):

And you just don't remember. And that's why you're hesitant to do anything, but you can be re-certified, and you should be, isn't that right, Dr. Whyte?

Dr. Whyte (22:21):

Yes. They do ask you to be re-certified regularly.

Diane (22:26):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (22:26):

Um, and depending on which level you take it, that varies. Whether it's every year, every three years, but, um, even just, even if you're not gonna be a certified person, but if you keep your skills up, so say I, I haven't done it in a couple of years, and I feel like I'm not quite sure, go take another class.

Diane (22:44):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (22:46):

Um, it's really, um, it's really beneficial to you as well as to the people around you.

Clay (22:52):

Yeah, I think so, Di, and, and like this again, and we've done... This feels so heavy though. (laughs) We've talked about so many serious topics. And I don't mean heavy in a way that you wanna avoid it. It's just, it's so sad because it's just one of those things that out of nowhere, something can happen. And as Dr. Whyte is talking about being in Louisiana, I've walked in some of those waterways where you can't see the bottom because of the color of the water. And you have no idea if you could be stepping off of one of those shelves into an 18-foot drop where you know no one can get to you. Um, is there any information, and I'd like to both for parents, but just for others, just lay people in general about this subject that you think we should share.

Dr. Whyte (23:37):

We love our water sports, our water exercise. We like to be out in it. And I, I want people to enjoy it. I, I don't wanna discourage that use. Um, it is a great exercise. You know, any mama who has taken their child to the pool knows that it's great because they come home worn out and you get [inaudible 00:23:56]-

Clay (23:56):

(laughs)

Diane (23:56):

(laughs) Exactly. (laughs)

Dr. Whyte (23:56):

(laughs) It's a good thing. So I don't wanna discourage it, but it is easy to stay as safe as you can. And if you have a pool at your home, one of the things that we didn't talk about is making sure that you have that secured with a fence and with a gate-

Clay (24:14):

Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (24:14):

... that locks.

Diane (24:14):

Excellent point. Yes.

Dr. Whyte (24:17):

It doesn't have to be a, like a key lock, but it can be a, a push button lock or a, or anything that a child cannot easily open, and that it's so... You know, securely locked when you come out of the pool.

Clay (24:29):

Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (24:29):

And then there are also a lot of... You know, we have children that drown every year because they slipped outside, and they got into the family pool, and they weren't noticed. There are a lot of alarm systems now that you can put on your pool whenever the water is displaced by a certain weight. Um, so it's not just a, a leaf falls in it, but if, um, you know, by a certain weight, it will alarm and let you know. Um, so there are a lot of ways to keep your home pool safe as well. Um, and I think that's really important.

Clay (25:03):

You know, it's so funny, Dr. Whyte is so right about kids in pools. I have been in places where, you know, when, when, (laughs) when a resort or a hotel writes no diving, I think children take that as a challenge-

Diane (25:17):  
(laughs) Yeah.

Clay (25:18):  
... to just cannonball at any point where they see those words-

Diane (25:20):  
Mm-hmm.

Clay (25:20):  
... and sometimes where they're jumping could drop seven feet just like that. And just as you're coming outside as a group to go get settled in, you don't realize little Johnny or little Janie has already jumped in 'cause they saw the water. And so what I would also encourage is keep your head on a swivel.

Diane (25:35):  
Mm-hmm.

Clay (25:35):  
When, even when you are with your kids and you're doing things, don't be so concerned about everything you're bringing out. Make sure you see them-

Diane (25:41):  
Mm-hmm.

Clay (25:42):  
... at all times, 'cause anything can happen, and they move so quickly-

Diane (25:46):  
Yeah.

Clay (25:46):  
... and, and can get away from you so fast.

Diane (25:48):  
Yeah.

Clay (25:48):  
And look, I would not wish that on anyone.

Diane (25:50):

No, not at all.

Clay (25:51):

Dr. Whyte-

Dr. Whyte (25:52):

And even if they're good swimmers.

Clay (25:54):

Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (25:55):

Because, you know, e- even a good swimmer can get into trouble. So even, like, you can... A lot of parents think, "Oh, my, my child can swim. He's on swim team. He does great." You never know what might happen that will distract him, or someone dunked him. And he, he had that laryngospasm or even just got caught off guard, and he, and he panics, and he gets in trouble. So being... Making sure you know where your child is is very important.

Diane (26:22):

And, you know, we've been talking about this, you know, today, Clay and Dr. Whyte, this is something that doesn't need to happen.

Clay (26:27):

Right.

Diane (26:28):

That is absolutely the bottom line. And that's why we are encouraging our listeners to take this seriously, and to do what you need to do for your, for yourself, number one as an adult and for your children, for your neighbors, for your community, 'cause a lot of places have a community pool.

Clay (26:46):

Mm-hmm.

Diane (26:47):

You may find yourself in that situation. So, Dr. Whyte, this has been, this has been a valuable, valuable podcast.

Clay (26:54):

Absolutely.

Diane (26:55):

Is there-

Dr. Whyte (26:55):

Can I add one, one thing?

Clay (26:56):

Absolutely.

Diane (26:57):

Okay. Yes, please.

Dr. Whyte (26:58):

You mentioned diving, and I was a pediatric did, worked in pediatric critical care units for a long time before I, in my other previous life.

Diane (27:09):

(laughs)

Dr. Whyte (27:09):

Um, and one of the things that I have seen a lot of is teenagers, pre-teens, you know, once they know how to dive, they... Especially young boys-

Diane (27:20):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Whyte (27:20):

... they love to dive.

Diane (27:21):

Yeah.

Dr. Whyte (27:22):

And we need to really teach our children to watch where they're diving.

Clay (27:26):

Right.

Dr. Whyte (27:27):

And that means if you're in a pool, do not dive into the shallow end. Even if you know, uh, you're a swimmer, and you do- you, you've taken a dive off a platform, and you know how to do it pretty shallow. You just never know. And I've seen so many children left quadriplegic because they, um, have hit their head and broken their neck and then their, their life is forever changed. And if you're in a, a natural waterway, you never know what's in that water.

Clay (27:59):

Yep.

Dr. Whyte (28:00):

It's always better to jump in rather than to dive in because a broken foot is a lot better for you than a broken neck.

Clay (28:08):

Yep.

Dr. Whyte (28:09):

So, um, just being aware that even though diving is fun, and it gets you further down the way quicker, um, it, it can have some devastating consequences if you don't know, you know, what you're diving into.

Clay (28:23):

Yeah. Just a story recently about a young man going into one of these waterways and jumped or fell right onto a tree stump or something under there that he didn't know was under-

Diane (28:31):

Oh, no.

Clay (28:31):

... 'cause the water is so dark-

Diane (28:32):

Mm-hmm.

Clay (28:32):

... you cannot see it, so. Doc, Dr. Whyte, what Diane said earlier about the importance of this in your work is, is spot on. I mean, I could not say it any better than that. I... We truly appreciate you, and all of your colleagues for this kinds of information that you spread to our public because, look, we want everyone who wants to go out and enjoy the beauty of Louisiana to make it home.

Diane (28:54):

Yeah. Home safely. Yes.

Clay (28:56):

Or if you're going to the beach-

Diane (28:56):

Yeah.

Clay (28:56):



... to be able to get back home. And so-

Diane (28:58):

Yeah.

Clay (28:58):

... thank you so much. And we also appreciate all of you for listening to today's episode. For more information about summer safety and health topics in Louisiana, make sure to tune into other episodes of Vax Matters or More That Matters. Until next time, stay safe out there.