



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

SWIM SAFELY

YMCA of Abilene

LOSE THE VEST, WHEN YOU PASS THE TEST

Q: What age are children required to take a swim test?

A: All swimmers 15 years and younger are required to pass a swim test before being allowed to be in a YMCA pool without a personal flotation device (PFD) or without direct adult supervision.

Q: What does the swim test consist of?

A: The swim test consists of swimming the length of the pool during which youth are asked to:

- Jump into the deep end of the pool, submerge fully, return to the surface and immediately begin swimming without pushing off the wall.
- Swim in a horizontal position on the stomach and on top of the water.
- Exit the pool without assistance using either the wall or pool ladder.

Q: When can my child take a swim test?

A: The swim test will be offered as determined by each individual YMCA family center to insure the guard is able to monitor the pool at all times. A certified lifeguard or swim instructor are able to administer swim tests.

Q: What is a PFD?

A: A PFD stands for a Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (lifejacket).

Q: Why is the Y strengthening their swim policy rules to mandate the use of a personal flotation device (PFD)?

A: Swimming can be a life long sport and exercise option. However, the dangers of water are real. To keep everyone safe, you need to follow swimming pool safety policies. About 300 children younger than 5 years old drown each year often because of relaxed safety practices.

Q: Where can my child swim if they pass the test?

A: Swimmers 7 and younger can swim independently in the pool without a PFD, but must have an adult remain on-site in the pool area. Swimmers age 8 and older may use the pool on their own without a PFD and without a parent at the pool with them, however parents must remain on-site at the YMCA.

Q: What if my child has not yet passed the swim test?

A: Swimmers who have not passed the test yet are required to wear a PFD unless he or she is within arm length distance from an adult, 18 years or older.

Q: Do I (the parent/adult) need to stay at the pool while my child is swimming?

A: Swimmers who pass the test and who are age 8 and older may use the pool on their own without a personal floatation device (PFD) and without a parent present at the pool. If the child is 8 years of age or younger, then the parent must be on-site but may monitor their child while using another part of the swimming pool.

Q: If I am with my child in the water, does he/she have to wear the PFD?

A: No, if the adult remains within arm length distance of the child, then the child does not have to wear the PFD. The adult must only be with one child at a time in this situation. Siblings who haven't passed the test must either be in a PFD or engaging in an activity somewhere else at the Y such as KidzFit, or child watch.

Q: Can my child use the diving board if they have not passed the swim test?

A: No. Youth who have not passed the swim test may not use the diving board.

Q: How can I prepare my child to pass the swim test?

A: Swim Lessons in a private, or group setting are available. Please check at the welcome center for more information.

Q: Does the YMCA provide PFDs?

A: Yes. We have a limited number of PFDs in several sizes. These are made available on a first come, first served basis.

Q: Can I bring my own PFD?

A: Yes. You may bring and use your own PFD as long as it is Coast Guard-approved.

Q: Can my child swim without a PFD?

A: Yes, but only if they are within arm length distance of a parent/guardian and are the only child the parent is watching. When you are one-on-one with your child, you will need to remain in the water within arm length distance of your child at all times.

Q: What if I have two children to watch?

A: If you have two or more children, only one child can be with the parent without a PFD. The other children are required to have on a PFD in the water, or be engaged in another activity at the Y such as KidzFit, or child watch.

Q: Who is allowed to use the diving board?

A: The diving board is available for use during open swim times and may be used by all children who have passed the swim test.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Lifeguards have the discretion to mandate a PFD on a swimmer at any time as well as require a swim test for any swimmer at any time.

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PASS THE TEST, LOSE THE VEST