

Red Cross says Learn to Swim Before Heading to Pool or Lake

(KTNC) - Many families will be spending more time around water, either swimming in pools or lakes, boating, or heading to a beach, this summer. Kara Kelly, at the American Red Cross, says it's a wise idea to first take a course from the agency in swimming or basic water safety.

Kelly says there are five basic skills people should know before they head into any body of water, whether or not there is a lifeguard present. Those skills include how to float, tread water, and being able to go underwater and come back up. The list of basic skills also includes getting out of the water without a ladder and being able to swim 25 yards.

Kelly says men are significantly more likely than women to know all five basic swimming skills, while about one-third of blacks report they can perform all five skills compared to more than half of whites.

Kelly notes only 40-percent of parents say their kids know basic swimming skills, yet 90-percent say those same kids will be taking part in water-based activities this summer.

You can learn some of the basics using a smartphone. Kelly says the Red Cross Swim App has information on some basic swimming strokes and can be downloaded free of charge from Google Play and the Apple Store.

This summer marks 100 years the Red Cross has offered swimming courses.