

Important information you should know if you want to learn to scuba dive

Scuba diving is an exciting activity which attracts hundreds of thousands of new participants annually. If you are in good health, are trained and equipped properly and follow recommended procedures, you will be able to enjoy scuba diving for many years.

However, some people just shouldn't dive. Certain medical conditions make diving extremely hazardous and can lead to serious injury or death. This brochure outlines some of the medical conditions that disqualify you from scuba diving.

In general, any chronic condition which affects your ability to participate in strenuous activity, maintain clear sinuses and ears, or breathe will exclude you. If you are prone to seizures, or panic easily, you will not be accepted for training. Even if these conditions are controlled with medication and you are symptom-free out of the water, scuba diving is not for you. Insulin-dependent diabetics and pregnant women are also excluded. The good news is that most people can enjoy diving!

Scuba diving is for you if . . .



You are healthy and in good physical condition

Diving is a physical activity that can be strenuous. Often this strenuous activity is not anticipated or planned. Being immersed in water makes your heart work one third harder than normal. Any heart or circulatory condition that restricts the ability to exercise vigorously may exclude a person from scuba diving. Usually people with high blood pressure should not scuba dive. Cold, stress, exercise, and fatigue can be fatal for a person with a cardiovascular disease. The use of a medication to control a cardiovascular disease is unacceptable while scuba diving. Such medicine may not work the same way under water as it does on land.



Your ears and sinuses are clear and healthy

Your body is subjected to changes in pressure when diving. The pressure you feel in your ears when flying or when going to the bottom of a swimming pool is multiplied many times when you descend with scuba equipment. Your sinuses and ears must be clear, normal, and healthy if you want to scuba dive. Attempting to dive with air spaces that are not clear and normal can be painful and can cause permanent injury or loss of hearing. Using medication to clear congested airways while scuba diving is usually not acceptable.



Your lungs and air passages are free of problems

The pressure changes encountered while scuba diving can affect your lungs. High pressure air breathed at depth expands during ascent. If the air is trapped in your lungs, it can cause the lungs to expand and rupture. You could die from a lung overexpansion injury. Any abnormal respiratory condition may disqualify a person for scuba diving. Asthma, even if controlled with medication, is an unacceptable condition because an attack under water can cause high pressure air to be trapped in the lungs.



Your central nervous system is free from disorders

Any condition that causes seizures or blackouts or that requires medication to prevent seizures or blackouts excludes a person from scuba diving. A convulsive seizure or loss of consciousness occurring under water is likely to cause a person to drown or to suffer a lung overexpansion injury.



You are not an insulin-dependent diabetic

Individuals with diabetes may participate in scuba diving if the condition can be controlled by diet only. Insulin-dependent diabetics should not dive. An insulin reaction while submerged may cause drowning.



You are not pregnant

Pregnancy excludes females from scuba diving. There are possible significant risks to the unborn child. Menses is not a disqualifier unless the condition limits physical activity. Intrauterine devices and tampons pose no known problems.



You are calm and comfortable in the water

People who are prone to panic should not scuba dive. Panic adversely affects your ability to make prudent, sensible decisions and is considered by many diving safety authorities to be one of the leading causes of death in recreational scuba diving. Some anxiety and apprehension are normal; but if you have excessive fear of water, confined spaces, or the ocean, you should not pursue scuba diving. The use of medications to control various disorders is unacceptable.



You abstain from excessive alcohol or drug use

Alcoholics and habitual users of recreational drugs should not dive. Diving requires coordination, alertness, and good judgment. The effects of drugs can cause behavior at depth that could be fatal. Drugs increase the chances of a diver experiencing diving diseases such as nitrogen narcosis and decompression sickness. A person who indulges in alcohol or drugs consistently is medically disqualified as a scuba diver.

Note: There are 3 pool requirements that you will need to perform: Being able to

swim 9 lengths of a standard 75' pool, being able to swim a mere 45' underwater, and being able to tread water, float, or drown-proof for 10 minutes.