



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### Keeping Kids Safe Around Water this Summer

**HIGHLAND**— As the weather heats up and more children and families head to pools and beaches, HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Highland wants to remind parents and caregivers to always keep an eye on their kids and actively supervise them when they are in and around water.

While it might seem like children would be at a higher risk for drowning at a crowded community pool, most drownings among children ages 1 to 4 occur in home swimming pools, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). Among those ages 1 to 14, fatal drowning remains the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death behind motor vehicle crashes.

“It is important to keep in mind that a drowning child cannot cry or shout out for help so simply just being near your child doesn't always help,” says Dr. Vinay Bhooma, chief medical officer. “By following a few basic safety tips, beginning with keeping your eyes on your kids at all times, you can ensure that swimming is as safe as it is fun this summer.”

Studies show that while a majority of parents say they supervise their children while swimming, many acknowledge they engage in other distracting activities at the same time, such as scrolling on their smartphone, talking, eating, reading or taking care of another child. A near-drowning incident can also have lifelong consequences. Kids who survive a near-drowning may have brain damage that may result in long-term disabilities such as memory problems, learning disabilities and permanent loss of basic functioning. Even after just four to six minutes under water, the damage is usually irreversible.

The hospital recommends the following tips to keep kids safe in and around water:

1. **Give kids your undivided attention.** Actively supervise children in and around water, without any distractions.

2. **Use the “water watcher” strategy.** When there are several adults present and children are swimming, designate an adult as the “water watcher” for a certain amount of time (such as 15-minute periods) to prevent lapses in supervision.
3. **Teach kids not to swim alone – buddy up.** Whether you’re swimming in a community pool, backyard pool or in a lake, teach children to swim with an adult. Older, more experienced swimmers should still swim with a partner every time. From the first time your kids swim, teach children to never go near or in water without an adult with them.
4. **Use proper floatation devices.** Inflatable toys, rafts, air mattresses and water wings should never be used as lifesaving devices for children.
5. **Learn CPR.** While you may be busy with a million things to do, learning cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) should be on the top of the list. It will give you tremendous peace of mind – and the more peace of mind you have as a parent, the better.
6. **Be extra careful around pool drains.** Teach your children about the dangers of drain entanglement and entrapment and teach them to never play or swim near drains or suction outlets.
7. **Fence it off.** Home pool owners should install four-sided isolation fences, with self-closing and self-latching gates, around backyard swimming pools. This can help keep children away from the area when they aren’t supposed to be swimming.

For more information about HSHS St. Joseph’s Hospital Highland, visit the hospital’s website at [stjosephshighland.org](http://stjosephshighland.org).

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#### **About Hospital Sisters Health System**

Hospital Sisters Health System’s (HSHS) mission is to reveal and embody Christ’s healing love for all people through our high-quality Franciscan health care ministry. HSHS provides state-of-the-art health care to our patients and is dedicated to serving all people, especially the most vulnerable, at each of our physician practices and 15 local hospitals in two states – Illinois (Breeze, Decatur, Effingham, Greenville, Highland, Litchfield, O’Fallon, Shelbyville and Springfield) and Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Oconto Falls, Sheboygan and two in Green Bay). HSHS is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, and [Hospital Sisters of St. Francis](http://Hospital Sisters of St. Francis) is the founding institute. For more information about HSHS, visit [www.hshs.org](http://www.hshs.org). For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit