



PRESS RELEASE

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Holy Redeemer physician advises: Keep safety in reach when hitting the beach

(MEADOWBROOK, PA) – Whether lounging seaside or poolside, water woes can dampen a good time if you're not careful. "Swimming and other water activities are only fun and refreshing when nobody gets hurt," says Dr. Henry Unger, chairman of Emergency Medicine at Holy Redeemer Hospital and Medical Center.

Dr. Unger recommends the following safety strategies to help avoid water tragedies:

- Always swim with another person; never swim alone.
- Know your limitations and stay within them. Never attempt to keep up with a stronger, more adept swimmer, or encourage others to keep up with you.
- Children should receive constant, close adult supervision while in and around water.
- Just in case, maintain certification in both adult and child CPR.
- Swim in supervised, unrestricted areas. Heed "no swimming", "no trespassing" signs.
- Obey "no diving" signs – indicating headfirst entries are unsafe. Enter the water, feet first – particularly if you are unsure of the depth.
- Do not chew gum or eat while swimming to avoid choking.
- Although you do not have to wait an hour after eating (especially a large meal), let digestion begin before participating in strenuous activity.
- Never mix alcohol and swimming. Alcohol impairs judgment, balance and coordination and reduces your body's ability to stay warm.
- Always wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket when participating in a recreational water activity, such as boating, fishing or wave-running.
- Know local weather conditions and prepare for electrical storms. Water conducts electricity, so discontinue water activity once you hear or see a storm.
- If a water-related accident occurs, first scan the scene for safety, check the injured person, then call 9-1-1 and continue to care for him or her until help arrives.

Dr. Unger further cautions that adults should never leave children unattended in or near the water, even if a lifeguard is on-hand. "If your little one does slip underwater for a moment

during bath time or playing in the pool, know that the child will probably emerge sputtering and coughing,” says Dr. Unger. “However, if the child’s been underwater for longer, quickly, but calmly, follow these steps.

- Lift the child out of the water and lay him or her gently on the ground. Be prepared to clear and maintain an open airway in case the child vomits (lessons from CPR).
- If there is a chance that the child has sustained a neck injury, attention must be paid to limit neck movement.
- Immediately call 9-1-1. Even if the child appears to be okay, he or she may have inhaled water, which could harm the lungs.
- If the child is unconscious, check his or her breathing and pulse. If the child is not breathing, open and clear the airway to begin mouth-to-mouth and nose resuscitation (mouth-to-mouth is sufficient if the child is older). Then, if necessary, begin infant/child CPR.
- When the paramedics arrive, stand aside and allow them to care for your child.

“As the temperatures continue to rise, so does interest in recreational water activities,” says Dr. Unger. “As your child heads for the water, leave your towel, not your cares behind.”

Holy Redeemer Hospital and Medical Center’s emergency room (ER) focuses on you and your family. The new ER features private treatment rooms, 24/7 pediatric coverage, a digital radiology system and convenient bedside registration. Whether you need the life-saving capabilities of our certified primary stroke program, on-site cardiovascular center or have had a minor mishap, Holy Redeemer delivers the urgent care you need. For additional information about Holy Redeemer’s new ER, visit www.holyredeemer.com or call 1-800-818-HRHS.

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