

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Water Safety

Coldwater, MI. Trying to beat the heat in the pool and lake this summer? It's one of the best ways to cool down, but if we aren't careful, a fun day in the water can turn into a disaster.

Drowning, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is the second leading cause of unintentional injury death for children ages 1-14 years, and the fifth leading cause for people of all ages. "Water safety should be a concern no matter where you and your family swim, whether you are in the back yard, a public pool, or at the beach," says Jim Cook, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, "Actively supervising and being vigilant when around any body of water is going to help keep your children safe. Never assume that someone else is watching them."

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency wants you to enjoy the water while keeping your family safe. Here are some additional tips on how to do just that:

- Ensure that pool barriers enclose the entire pool area, are at least 4-feet high with gates that are self-closing, self-latching and open outward, and away from the pool. The latch should be high enough to be out of a small child's reach. If you have an above-ground or inflatable pool, remove access ladders and secure the safety cover whenever the pool is not in use.

- Enroll children in swimming lessons at an early age. Risk of drowning is decreased by as much as 88% when children aged 1-4 years take swimming lessons. Adults can also benefit from refresher courses.
- If you go boating, wear a life jacket! Most boating fatalities occur from drowning.
- Avoid alcohol. It impairs your judgment, balance, coordination, and your body's ability to stay warm. Avoid it when swimming and supervising children.
- Empty portable pools when not use. Children can drown in as little as one inch of water. Make sure all portable inflatable and baby pools are drained and put away immediately after use.
- Remove toys from the pool when it is not in use. They can attract young children into the pool. It's best to keep them stored out of sight.
- If a child is missing, always check the pool first. If a child has fallen into the pool, every second counts in preventing an accidental drowning.

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency wants you and your family to enjoy the outdoors and the warm weather while it is here. Knowledge is key when it comes to water and pool safety. Educating children from a very young age, and keeping yourself informed, can lead to a lifetime of healthy, safe swimmers. For more information and health tips, check out [www. bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org) and visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/BHSJWIC.

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