UW Health: Offers water safety reminders

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Madison, WI – As temperatures rise, Wisconsinites are getting back outside and into the water. The Pediatric Injury Prevention program at American Family Children's Hospital wants to share some reminders with families to help keep everyone safe this summer.

"Being outdoors in the water is a wonderful summertime experience for the whole family, but it is important to keep several safety tips in mind," said Rishelle Eithun, child health advocacy program manager at UW Health, "Because unfortunately, drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death among children ages 1-4."

Water Safety Tips for Families:

- **Watch kids when they are in or around water, without being distracted.** Young children can drown in as little as one inch of water, so it's important to keep them within arm's reach of an adult.
- **Empty all tubs, buckets, containers, and kids' pools immediately after use.** Store them upside down and out of children's reach.
- **Install fences around home pools.** A pool fence should surround all sides of the pool and be at least four feet tall with self-closing and self-latching gates.
- **Choose a water watcher.** When there are several adults present at pool or beach gathering, choose one to be responsible for watching children.
- **Teach children how to swim.** Enroll children in swim lessons when they are ready. Consider their age, development and how often they are around water.
- **Learn CPR and basic water rescue skills.**

These tips/resources are provided by Safe Kids Worldwide.

According to Eithun, it's also important to know that swimming or boating in natural bodies of water requires additional skills and knowledge.

- People tire faster and get into trouble more quickly when swimming in a body of water compared to a swimming pool.
- It is important to learn to swim. If you cannot swim, take extra precautions near water.
- When boating, don't overcrowd the boat and everyone should wear a lifejacket.
- Stay sober when on or in the water.
- Do not jump or dive into water when you cannot see the bottom or do not know the depth of the water. Serious injury can occur if a child or adult jumps into water that is too shallow or is hiding unseen rocks or debris.

A recorded interview with Eithun is available.