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Fairs and Festival Fun – How to Stay Safe This Summer

(BREESE, GREENVILLE, HIGHLAND, IL) – Summers are synonymous with fairs, festivals, outdoor concerts, and carnivals. Good music, tasty food, and fun rides and games at these events draw large crowds every summer. With the Clinton, Madison and Bond County fairs upon us over the next few weeks, HSHS St. Joseph's Hospitals in Breese and Highland, and HSHS Holy Family in Greenville want to ensure those who attend stay safe.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, foodborne illnesses increase during the summer months, due in part to the increase of food being cooked outdoors. Food safety practices should be the same at fairs as they are at restaurants and at home. Illinois law requires permits through county and local public health departments. Before you buy food from a vendor at a fair or festival, consider the following:

- Does the vendor have a clean workstation?
- Does the vendor have a sink for employees to wash their hands?
- Do the employees wear gloves or use tongs when handling food?
- Does the vendor have refrigeration on site for raw ingredients or pre-cooked foods?
- Has the vendor been inspected?

While at fairs, festivals and carnivals, it is also important to wash your hands often. This is especially true after petting animals, touching the animal enclosure, and exiting the animal enclosure – even if you did not touch an animal. Additionally, always wash hands after using the restroom, after playing a game or going on a ride, and before eating or drinking. In case there are no places to wash hands, bring hand sanitizers or disposable wipes to use.

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Other important tips to keep in mind when attending festivals and fairs:

- Drink plenty of water – This is especially true if it is a hot day with a high heat index and/or if any alcohol consumption occurs.
- If alcohol is available, exercise care. Don't take drinks from strangers and don't leave your drink unattended. Monitor your alcohol intake carefully, and do not use alcohol as a substitute for water. Since alcohol can dehydrate the body, it's important to drink as much (if not more) water than alcohol.
- Ensure you have suitable clothing for the weather conditions and the location of the event.
- Take proper sun safety measures – Apply and reapply sunscreen with SPF 30 or greater, seek shade periodically, wear sunglasses, and use protective barriers such as clothing and hats.

For information about the upcoming fairs, visit their web sites:

- Clinton County Fair, July 14-20 - clintoncofair.org
- Madison County Fair, July 23-28 - madcofair.com
- Bond County Fair, August 1-6 - bondcofair.com

HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Breese, HSHS Holy Family Hospital in Greenville and HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Highland are part of the Southern Illinois Division of Hospital Sisters Health System, which also include HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital in O'Fallon and HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital in Effingham.

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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 15 Local Systems and physician practices in Illinois (Breese, 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 is the founding institute. For more information about HSHS, visit www.hshs.org. For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit www.hospitalsisters.org.