

**PHOTO:** Download photo of Regi Geissler [here](#).

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## Lawn mowing is not child's play Top 5 tips to avoid injury

**Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls, WI** – Thirteen children, on average, receive emergency medical treatment every day for a lawn mower-related injury in the United States, according to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission. More than 86,000 adults are treated in an ER each year for lacerations, partial amputations and eye damage while cutting the grass.

HSHS Sacred Heart and St. Joseph's hospitals' trauma coordinator, Regi Geissler says injuries most commonly happen when people bypass the safety mechanisms on machinery. "Whether it's a push or riding mower, trimmer or tractor, the safety features are there for a reason," she says. "People often try to quickly clear out grass near the blade, or rush to get the job done and that's when accidents happen."

Experts have five top safety recommendations that will help protect you from head to toe this mowing season:

1. **Wear eye protection.** Debris often kicks up from behind mowers and trimmers - at up to 200 miles per hour, which can damage your eyes. Low hanging tree branches should also be trimmed regularly to prevent eye injuries. Safety goggles are recommended; don't rely on everyday eyeglasses.
2. **Shut off equipment.** This should be the first thing you do when you stop to empty the bagger, before you walk away from the machine, when you fill the gas tank - or before you unplug the device if it's electric – and before you reach toward the blade or engine.
3. **Watch out for kids.** It's best to keep children and pets inside while using machinery. It only takes one second for clothing, toys and hair to get caught in moving parts. Riding lawn mowers are designed for one person. Never let kids under 16 run a rider or children younger than 12 operate a push mower.
4. **Let the mower cool down before refilling the gas tank.** Exhaust from a lawn mower can reach 240 degrees Fahrenheit which can cause severe burns to hands and arms and hot splashes into your eyes from the new gas pouring onto the existing hot gasoline.
5. **Wear closed-toe shoes.** It is easy for a spinning blade to sever toes. Also, sandals and flip flops are less stable. A trip, slip or stumble could cause you to come into contact with moving or hot parts.

Geissler says if you experience a laceration, control the bleeding with pressure and a towel, and get to an emergency room immediately or call 911. If there is an amputation, and any part of the appendage is salvageable, wrap it with a clean cloth or gauze, place it in a bag with ice and bring it with you to the emergency room or give it to the paramedics who respond to your 911 call.

Community members should never delay or forgo emergency care, even as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect our communities. HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire and HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls are open 24/7 for safe, high-quality emergency care.

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### **About HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital**

[HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital](#) is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, the [Hospital Sisters of St. Francis](#) is the Founding Institute, and it is an affiliate of [Hospital Sisters Health System](#). Since 1889, it has been meeting patient needs in western Wisconsin with the latest medical innovations and technology, together with a Franciscan whole-person healing tradition.

### **About HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital**

[HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital](#) is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, the [Hospital Sisters of St. Francis](#) is the Founding Institute, and it is an affiliate of [Hospital Sisters Health System](#). Since 1885, it has served the people of the Chippewa Falls area with health care that is high tech and high touch. Known locally for the quality of the care it provides patients, the hospital has been recognized nationally for its outstanding patient satisfaction levels.

### **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. For more information about HSHS, visit [www.hshs.org](http://www.hshs.org). For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit [www.hospitalsisters.org](http://www.hospitalsisters.org).