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**JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute:
Prevent Swimmer's Ear This Season**

Edison, NJ—Summer is just around the corner and swim season is about to begin. Before you dive right into the water, make sure you're prepared. You've got your swimsuit, a great beach towel, and you never forget your sunblock, but what about ear plugs?

You've heard of swimmer's ear, that summer annoyance with symptoms that include redness of the outer ear, itching in the ear, and discomfort when you touch or wiggle the ear lobe. But do you know how serious it is or how to prevent it?

“Swimmer's ear, clinically known as otitis externa, is not something to take lightly as long-term damage can occur if not treated properly,” notes Dr. Virginia Toth, Manager of Audiology at JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute (JRI) in Edison. What can you do? You can try to jump up and down and look silly trying to get water out of your ear after a swim, but there's a better way—stop it before it starts. Says Toth, “Customized ear plugs are ideal for keeping the ear canal dry in order to prevent serious problems from developing.”

Moisture and bacteria trapped in the ear canal can cause swimmer's ear. Ear plugs aren't just for serious swimmers or children prone to swimmer's ear. They're also necessary for people recovering from ear infections or ear surgery or those who are prone to chronic conditions (such as drainage problems) who are going to submerge themselves in water, whether at a pool, in the bath or shower. Ear plugs help you keep the ear canal as dry as possible in order to prevent more severe problems from developing. Says Toth, “The best way to avoid swimmer's ear is to keep ears clean and dry. Swim plugs assist in keeping the ear dry and moisture free. When fit correctly, they act as a preventative aid and insurance for a summer of sunshine and fun.”

Swim plugs are simply soft custom ear molds without any bore or tubing. They are easy to put in and take out and comfortable to wear. Floatable swim plugs are currently available in translucent and a rainbow of neon colors. While no swim plug can create

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Prevent Swimmer's Ear This Season, add one

an absolutely watertight seal in the ear canal, properly fit swim plugs will keep out most of the moisture that can aggravate outer ear conditions. And customized ear plugs ensure the best fit.

The symptoms of swimmer's ear may resemble other medical conditions or problems. Remember to always consult a physician for a proper diagnosis. To discuss whether swim plugs are right for you, contact JRI's Speech and Audiology department at (732) 321-7063 (Voice/TDD).

Founded in 1974, The JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute is a major component of Solaris Health System, one of New Jersey's most comprehensive healthcare networks.

The JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute headquartered at the JFK Medical Center in Edison is a comprehensive rehabilitative service provider focused on educating the community on rehabilitative health and helping adults and children with disabilities reach optimal function and independence. The Institute offers a complete array of inpatient and outpatient programs and services in rehabilitative health, including stroke, orthopedics, prosthetic and orthotics, electrodiagnosis, fitness, cardiac, women's health, pain management, pediatrics, speech pathology and audiology, industrial and vocational rehab, and brain injury rehabilitation programs and services. JRI includes a 94-bed inpatient center in Edison. Outpatient centers are located in Edison, Metuchen, Monroe, Old Bridge, and Plainfield. Affiliated with the JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute is the Shore Rehabilitation Institute, a 40-bed inpatient and outpatient comprehensive rehabilitation hospital located in Brick, NJ. The Rehab Medicine Department at JRI also serves as the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation for UMDNJ, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) for its Comprehensive Inpatient Rehabilitation, Brain Injury, and Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation programs. For more information on The JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute, call 732-321-7790 or visit the organization online at <http://www.njrehab.org>.

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