

HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

NEWS FROM CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL HERMANN HOSPITAL SPRING/SUMMER 2009 **FOR PARENTS**

Understanding pediatric migraines

Migraines aren't just headaches for adults. They also can affect children and teens.

"Children as young as age 3 can have migraines," says Vasudeva Boosupalli, M.D., a board-certified pediatric neurologist affiliated with Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital and Memorial Hermann Southeast Hospital. "However, migraines tend to be more common in school-age children and adolescents."

What Migraines "Feel" Like for Kids

"Young children can't always express how they're feeling, so migraines may be hard to recognize," Dr. Boosupalli says. "Kids may say their head hurts all over, or that they feel dizzy. Sometimes they just stop playing and prefer to lie on the couch. Bright light and loud noises will bother them." They also may be irritable or complain of an upset stomach.

Preventing and Treating Bad Headaches

Some migraine triggers – like temperature changes – can't be controlled. But keeping your child's routine consistent can help prevent migraines. Dr.

Boosupalli offers these suggestions:

- Don't let your child skip meals. Hunger can cause headaches.
- Look out for foods that may trigger migraines, such as chocolate, nuts, cheese and raisins.
- Ensure your child drinks plenty of water, especially during warmer months. Dehydration can lead to migraines.
- Keep bedtimes consistent. Being tired causes migraines.

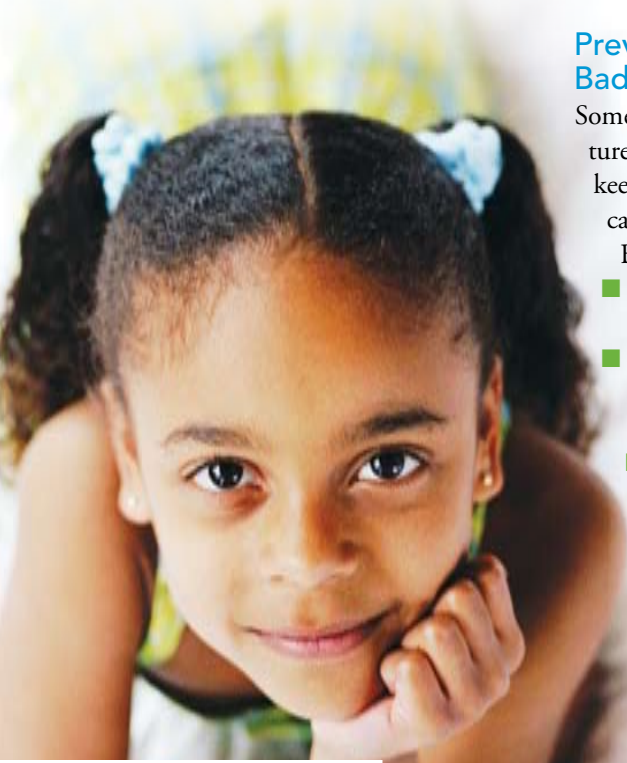
If your child has headaches, one of the pediatric health experts at Children's Memorial Hermann can help. For a physician referral, call 713.222.CARE or visit childrensmemorialhermann.org.

- Watch your child's stress level. "Kids are under a lot of pressure these days," Dr. Boosupalli says. Exercising can help your child reduce stress.

If your child does have a migraine, one of the best treatments is sleep, Dr. Boosupalli says. Proper dosage of an over-the-counter pain reliever, such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen or naprosyn, also can help ease symptoms.

When to Get Help

Let your family doctor or pediatrician know if your child has migraines. "If your older child or teen has frequent headaches – such as once a week – see your child's doctor," says Dr. Boosupalli. "Younger kids should get checked even sooner – after the first or second headache." Headaches in younger children may have a more serious cause. ■



From Patient to Provider

Leigh Ann Breen, 24, delights in her work as a board-certified Child Life specialist at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital. Breen, who has achondroplastic dwarfism, was a patient of the hospital from age 3 months to 21 years old. She says she owes her life to her medical team.

Achondroplasia is a genetic bone growth disorder that causes about 70 percent of all dwarfism. In people with the condition, bone growth is slowed, causing short bones and stature. Orthopedic difficulties are common and, as in Breen's case, often require surgery.

"It's not a disease; it's a medical condition," explains Breen. "I'm not sick, and I can do things like anyone else – sometimes I just need a step stool!"

Breen's dream of working at the same hospital that gave her brilliant medical care, including 19 surgeries, came true about a year ago. She now works in the pediatric dialysis unit.

"Being able to give back to such an amazing institution is incredibly fulfilling and rewarding," Breen says. "When you're a patient here, you're a part of the Memorial Hermann family. It starts with the medical team taking care of you as if you're their own child and it extends all the way down to the housekeeping staff, who call you by name."

Breen comforts one of her patients by reading.



Dedicated doctors help teenager beat birth defect



Kat Bergez, age 16

Lisa and Craig Bergez were living in Washington, D.C., when their 6-month-old daughter Katherine was diagnosed with Chiari malformation, a structural defect in the cerebellum, the part of the brain that controls balance. "The diagnosis was incidental. Between her 3-month and 6-month checkups, Kat's pediatrician noticed a significant jump in her head circumference," says Lisa Bergez. "A sonogram showed enlarged ventricles. Through magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), the doctors found the Chiari malformation."

Over the next year-and-a-half, Kat developed normally. The family sought several medical opinions and considered surgical options. "But she had no symptoms and, developmentally, she was right where she should have been," Lisa Bergez says. "We decided to take a wait-and-see approach. Eventually, we moved to Houston and put it in the back of our minds."

Many years later, when Kat was a freshman in high school, she developed an intense, constant headache. "The intensity decreased after a few days, but the headache sizzled into an every day, every minute pain in the back of her head," Lisa Bergez says. Then Kat developed other symptoms: dizziness and tunnel vision.

After ineffective treatments and misdiagnoses, and as the headaches became more severe, a therapist suggested that Kat's headaches might

be associated with Chiari. Her mother researched the topic and found a video from the National Institutes of Health Web site of a Chiari malformation surgery performed by Stephen Fletcher, D.O., a pediatric neurosurgeon affiliated with Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital.

Soon the Bergez family met with Dr. Fletcher, who referred them to his colleague Ian Butler, M.D., a pediatric neurologist associated with Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital. Dr. Butler believed that the MRI results and Kat's medical history were compatible with compression of the brain secondary to her Chiari malformation.

Kat underwent surgery in July. Recovery went quickly for the 16-year-old, who has an interest in medicine. "Before the surgery, I couldn't concentrate or do anything after school except go home and lie down," says Kat Bergez. "Not being able to find help was stressful. We bounced around the Houston medical community until we finally found the group of doctors at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital."

"Kat recovered beautifully," says Lisa Bergez. "We were very fortunate to find doctors with an intense ongoing interest in Chiari malformation." ■

Water safety tips to keep your children safe

Keep a constant watch on children at the pool to prevent drowning

Quickly and quietly, hundreds of children will drown this year – often with adults just yards away.

In fact, drowning is the No. 2 cause of unintentional injury-related death among children ages 1 to 14, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It's second only to traffic crashes.

Parents may think a child is safe in the water when an adult is nearby. But many drowning incidents in young children occur when the child is under the care of one or both parents.

Follow these tips for water safety to protect your children from injury or death:

- Designate an adult whose only responsibility is to watch children in or around the water. This person should not be distracted by other activities such as talking on the phone, reading or supervising other children.
- Stay within arm's length of toddlers and children who can't swim. This way you can reach out and grab them if necessary.

- Install barriers around your pool. A pool fence should be at least 4 feet high and have latches that are out of children's reach. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission offers more safety guidelines for barriers around residential pools.
- Remove any toys, balls or floats from the pool and surrounding area after use. Children may be tempted to reach for these and possibly fall in as a result.
- Do not replace life jackets with water wings, inner tubes or foam noodles, as these are not designed for swim safety.
- Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Performing CPR before paramedics arrive could make a difference for the victim.
- Keep a cell phone and rescue equipment by the pool at all times.

To keep pool time a fun activity for the whole family, remember to practice these safety measures and keep close watch over children in or near water at all times. ■

You can find more great water safety tips for kids at childrensmemorialhermann.org under Kids Health.



melon-cucumber smoothie

Prep time: 10 minutes

- 1½ cups **watermelon**, 1" cubes
- 1½ cups **cantaloupe**, 1" cubes
- ½ cup chopped **cucumber** (peeled and seeded, ½" diced)
- 1 cup nonfat vanilla **yogurt**
- 2 cups **ice cubes**
- fresh **lime**

1. Combine all ingredients, except lime, in a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Pour into glasses and garnish with a squeeze of fresh lime juice.

Get more fun and healthy recipes for your family! Visit childrensmemorialhermann.org and select Kids Health.

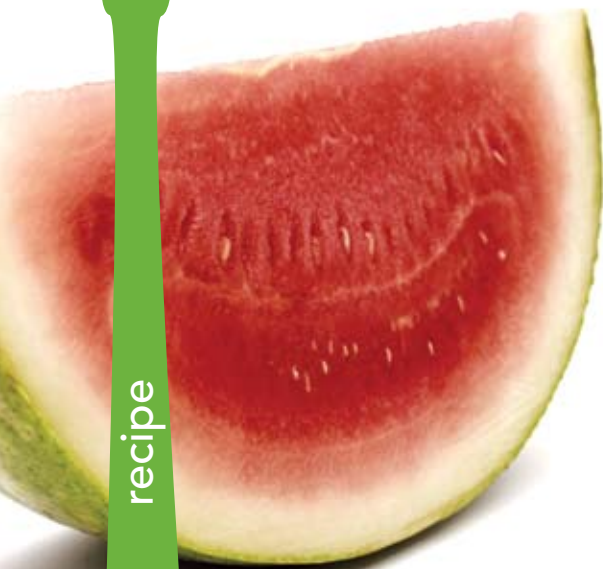
Makes two 16 oz. servings

Nutritional analysis (per serving):
173 calories, 7 g protein, 0.5 g fat, 35 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 3 mg cholesterol, 109 mg sodium, 213 mg calcium, 1 mg iron, and 34 mcg folic acid.

Nutritional analysis may vary depending on ingredient brands used.



recipe



Picturing Better Healthcare for Kids

A Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital photograph by Jim LaCombe was selected by the National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions (NACHRI) for "Champions," its 2009 traveling exhibition designed to illustrate the vital role children's hospitals play in children's lives.



"The photograph depicting little Marissa, whose strength helped her battle twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome, respiratory syncytial virus, pneumonia and 34 days on extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, stood out for its composition, quality, fit with the exhibit theme and the story it tells," says Sallie Strang, director of communications for NACHRI and curator of the photo exhibit.

The photo was chosen from nearly 250 photographs submitted by children's hospitals across the country. The exhibit will be at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital in November.

Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital
6411 Fannin, Houston, Texas 77030. Call **713.704.KIDS (5437)**.

New children's emergency center will put **kids first**

A new Children's Emergency Center will bring specialized pediatric and neonatal services to families in the west Houston area. Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center will open the new center in June as part of the expanding Children's Memorial Hermann Memorial City.

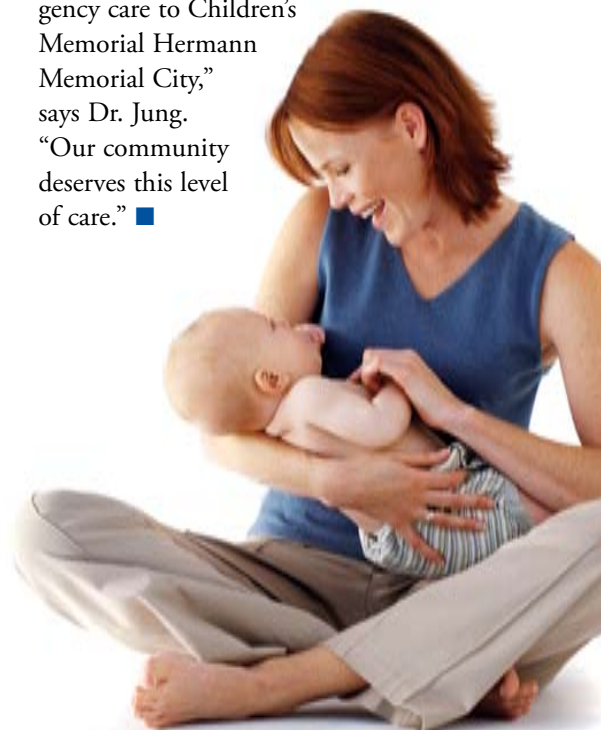
The new Children's Emergency Center – to be located inside the Memorial Hermann Memorial City Emergency Center – will have four rooms designated for pediatric care. And while most emergency centers are staffed by adult-trained emergency physicians, the new center will have on-site pediatricians, nurses and emergency room physicians specially trained in pediatric emergency medicine.

"The addition of specialized pediatric emergency care is one of the most important and exciting changes we're making in the level of care we provide to west Houston families," says Peter Jung, M.D., chief of pediatrics at Children's Memorial Hermann

Memorial City. "Pediatric emergency physicians provide children with a higher level of care. They can identify needs faster and more accurately, and they understand how kids react to medications."

Brenda Muniz, clinical manager of the Emergency Center, agrees. "Children's needs are special, and their parents need specific kinds of encouragement and education," says Muniz. "We can better meet those needs with a specialized unit."

"We're excited to bring pediatric emergency care to Children's Memorial Hermann Memorial City," says Dr. Jung. "Our community deserves this level of care." ■



For more information on the Children's Emergency Center, including hours of operation, visit childrensmemorialhermann.org.