

FALL/WINTER 2011

bridges

TO A HEALTHIER LIFE



Kids' Sports Injuries

UCSF fields a top team of pediatric specialists in treatment and prevention

Kids who play sports can benefit from the exercise and character building, but those benefits come with risk.

"Because children have growing skeletons, they are susceptible to overuse injuries," says Dr. Coleen Sabatini, a pediatric orthopaedic surgeon at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital.

"Pitcher's elbow" is a common overuse injury among Little Leaguers, for example, while Osgood-Schlatter condition—an inflammation just below the knee—often causes pain in children whose sports require frequent jumping. To prevent such maladies, young athletes' caretakers shouldn't "ask more of kids

than their age and development can handle," advises Dr. Sabatini. "Also, make sure a child has good muscle strength, balance and flexibility to avoid additional abnormal forces on growth plates, bones and joints."

Acute injuries, such as concussions and ankle injuries, are also problematic, adds Dr. Sabatini. "It's extremely important to have people present—trainers, physicians, educated coaches—who know how to evaluate child athletes and make sure they're safe to participate."

At UCSF, highly skilled pediatric orthopaedic surgeons, sports medicine doctors and physical therapists combat student athletes' injuries on many fronts. For example, UCSF's PlaySafe program, directed by Dr. Anthony Luke of UCSF

Sports Medicine, offers physical exams for San Francisco student athletes, sponsors coach and athlete education sessions, and provides doctors and trainers for high school football games.

"It's our privilege to treat the various sports-related problems that affect young athletes," Dr. Sabatini says. "Here at UCSF, we provide kids with the quality care and information they need to get back on the field and prevent future injuries from occurring."

For an appointment, have your child's pediatrician refer you to UCSF's Pediatric Orthopaedic Clinic. The clinic can be reached at (415) 353-2967. For more information, visit www.ucsfbenioffchildrens.org/orthopedics.



UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital



Dr. Hanmin Lee

Fetal Surgery for Spina Bifida

Ever since Dr. Michael Harrison performed the world's first surgery on a human fetus at UCSF 30 years ago, the medical center has continued groundbreaking advances in the field.

Now a long-term study conducted

by UCSF and two other medical centers confirms the benefits of such early intervention. In the most serious form of spina bifida—a birth defect in which the neural tube fails to close properly—babies who underwent surgery in utero rather than after birth had improved mental development, a lower incidence of paralysis and a greatly reduced need to shunt spinal fluid away from the brain. “This landmark study offers real hope for improving the lives of children with spina bifida worldwide,” says Dr. Hanmin Lee, director of the Fetal Treatment Center at UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital.

Brian and Heather Giovanola’s son, Thomas, was diagnosed with spina bifida 21 weeks into the pregnancy and the couple opted to have the procedure at UCSF. Now Thomas is a happy, active toddler who walks with the help of braces. His cognitive skills are normal, and he never needed a shunt in his brain. Heather says gratefully, “The choices we made allowed him to be mobile instead of in a wheelchair.” [Learn more about UCSF’s fetal surgery at www.ucsfhealth.org/fetaltreatment](http://www.ucsfhealth.org/fetaltreatment) or call (415) 476-0445.

LEADING STROKE SERVICES FOR ADULTS

The Neurovascular Disease and Stroke Center at UCSF Medical Center is a designated advanced primary stroke center, providing preventive care and screening for patients at high risk for stroke and other neurovascular conditions. The center offers treatments that can reduce stroke risk, including medication, removal of arterial plaque and rerouting of blood flow to bypass abnormal blood vessels in the brain. For more information, visit www.ucsfhealth.org/stroke or call (415) 353-8897.

Keeping a Close Watch on Kids’ Diabetes

U.S. News & World Report ranks UCSF’s care among the nation’s best

Diabetes is one of the most common chronic conditions of childhood, but it requires uncommon attentiveness. “With some conditions, you take your medicine three times a day and you’re done,” says Dr. Saleh Adi, a pediatric endocrinologist, diabetes specialist and director of Pediatric Diabetes Outpatient Services at UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital. “But diabetes always requires adjustments.”

For this reason, UCSF has a dedicated team of physicians, nurses, dietitians and social workers

who provide comprehensive, family-centered and individualized pediatric diabetes outpatient services. “Our work focuses solely on diabetes,” Dr. Adi says. “This is our passion, and this is our life.”

The team works with the child’s school, parents, child care providers and any other caregivers, allowing for constant feedback and data collection. Most young patients at UCSF have type 1 diabetes, formerly called juvenile-onset diabetes. Type 2 diabetes, formerly called adult-onset diabetes, is rising among children

nationally. This trend hasn’t been as strong locally because of the Bay Area’s relatively healthier lifestyle and increased awareness, but UCSF is certainly experiencing a significant rise in type 2 diabetes patients.

Children whose diabetes is managed at UCSF have access to the latest therapies. “Some of the top scientific research on diabetes is being done at UCSF—it’s probably one of the best places in the world,” explains Dr. Adi. “Researchers are trying to understand the physiology of the pancreas, the development of

When a Stroke Strikes a Child

The bad news and the good: At the age of 2, Paige Jenkins suffered a venous sinus thrombosis—a rare type of stroke caused by a clot in the brain. Thanks to her treatment at the UCSF Pediatric Stroke and Cerebrovascular Disease Center, the youngster, now almost 3, has made a complete recovery. “She received magnificent care at UCSF,” says Paige’s mother, Bette Jenkins.

Although rare, strokes in children—even fetuses—do occur, afflicting about 4,000 U.S. patients per year. “We have better neuroimaging techniques now to recognize childhood strokes,” says the stroke center’s director, Dr. Heather J. Fullerton. “In the past, they would often have been labeled cerebral palsy.”

The UCSF stroke center is one of only a few pediatric centers in the

country that offer comprehensive care by a team of multidisciplinary experts. In addition to Dr. Fullerton, another child neurologist trained in vascular neurology, Dr. Christine Fox, recently joined the staff. “Our team is capable of treating the most challenging and complex conditions,” says Dr. Fullerton.

Strokes in children are often tricky to recognize, but, as with adult strokes, a speedy response is the key to minimizing injury. If your child develops sudden weakness on one side of the body, or has difficulty walking in conjunction with stomach flu symptoms, consider it a neurologic emergency, advises Dr. Fullerton, and call 911.

For more information about the UCSF Pediatric Stroke and Cerebrovascular Disease Center, visit www.ucsfbenioffchildrens.org/stroke.



Paige Jenkins with her mother, Bette



Dr. Saleh Adi

insulin-producing beta cells and the immune process that leads to type 1 diabetes.” In fact, UCSF is exploring protocols to cure type 1 diabetes and

will soon be testing ways to prevent type 1 in at-risk kids.

More developments for the future: Thanks to an extraordinarily generous \$10 million gift from an anonymous and grateful family, UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital will include the Madison Clinic for Pediatric Diabetes at UCSF, offering world-class pediatric diabetes care through expanded services and even more specialty staff.

To learn more about UCSF’s pediatric diabetes resources, please visit www.ucsfbenioffchildrens.org/diabetes or call (415) 353-7337.

Targeting Sugar

According to Dr. Robert H. Lustig, a UCSF pediatric endocrinologist, excessive sugar consumption is the culprit in this nation’s skyrocketing rates of obesity and diabetes. Calorie for calorie, he argues, sugar causes more insulin resistance in the liver and tissue damage than other foods. He advises against giving kids juice or other sugary drinks and recommends always pairing carbs with fiber. See his talk (which has more than 1.5 million hits) by searching for “Sugar: The Bitter Truth” at www.youtube.com.



Stop Cyberbullying

Know where your kids go online and keep Internet-capable devices out of their bedrooms, experts say

Cyberbullying—abuse of youth via online, text or digital media—is getting so much attention nowadays because it’s so prevalent, says Dr. Clement Donahue, a UCSF pediatrician. “All parents should talk about cyberbullying with their kids, especially if they text or frequent Facebook,” Donahue says. “And if your child is being cyberbullied, be empathetic and not blameful. Work with your child to develop plans to handle bullying.”

More recommended strategies: Strongly encourage your child not to respond to cyberbullying, but try to ID the cyberbully. Many websites and phone companies allow you to block people or file a complaint. If the problem continues, contact the kids’ schools and your pediatrician. FYI: Police can respond if the aggressive behavior is criminal. In such serious cases, consider consulting an attorney. For more tips, visit www.stopbullying.gov and www.stopcyberbullying.org.

TO OUR NEIGHBORS

For more than 100 years, the passion and ingenuity found at UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital have continuously redefined what is possible in pediatric health care.

Several examples of this legacy can be found in this issue of *Bridges*. Paige Jenkins, a pediatric stroke survivor, and Thomas Giovanola, who received surgery in utero for spina bifida, are two children with very different diagnoses who share a common bond: Their young lives were forever changed by the pioneering spirit and unmatched skill found here.

Confidence in this vision has recently led to a \$10 million gift to establish a new, world-class pediatric diabetes center at UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital. Expanded services and more specialty staff, coupled with the groundbreaking diabetes research being done here, mean that a disease on the rise in children will be met by great minds and innovative therapies—and more children will share the bond of a healthy childhood restored.

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Produced by DCP

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