



Heels with Wheels

By Dr. Maria Nguyen, Alvin Pediatrics



Roller shoes, popularized by brands such as “Heelys” and “Street Gliders,” have been available in the U.S. since 2000 and are still a craze with the grade school-age crowd. With a recessed wheel embedded in each heel, the shoes allow kids (and a few brave adults) to walk almost normally, or to lean back and glide on the wheels.

The most common injury associated with “heeling” or “street gliding” is a broken wrist; while not common, more serious injuries requiring hospitalization have been reported. The majority of injuries are sustained by new users of roller shoes not wearing protective gear. If your child is going to be using roller shoes, be sure to follow the manufacturer’s safety recommendations. Kids (or adults) should wear a helmet and use wrist guards and knee and elbow pads. The American Academy of Pediatricians and roller shoe makers also offer the following tips:

- Always stagger feet with the strong foot in front (putting them side by side can cause loss of balance).
- When walking with the wheels installed, do not lean back on the heels. Be sure to walk with toes touching the ground first.
- Be extra cautious when heeling on uneven surfaces. Debris and crevices can cause sudden stops and uncontrolled movements.
- Never heel faster than you can walk. If you feel you are losing balance, step out of heeling by putting your toes down and leaning forward.

It’s Always Allergy Season

By Dr. Fritz Zaunbrecher, Texas City Family Health



A runny nose is a common symptom among those seeking medical care. In our part of the country, summer allergies are a frequent complaint. The Gulf Coast has a perennial allergy season; pollens are with us year round, unless we experience a hard freeze in winter. In the spring, trees are the biggest cause of aggravation for allergy sufferers. In fall, Texas prairies and empty fields are a sea of ragweed, both short and tall. We have molds year round, and the ubiquitous house dust mite loves the Gulf Coast. Symptoms include itchy nose, eyes and throat—and corresponding sneezes,

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Swine Flu still here



The new H1N1 virus (Swine Flu) is starting to make headlines again. It’s caused illness and hospitalizations in the U.S. during the normally flu-free summer months. That’s led to some concerns about what the upcoming flu season might bring, and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is making plans for what it believes may be a severe flu season.

Every flu season brings illness, doctor’s visits, hospitalizations and sometimes even deaths. Vaccines are the best tool we have to prevent influenza. The CDC hopes that people will visit their doctors and clinics to get vaccinated against seasonal flu as soon as vaccines become available, later this year. Although the seasonal flu vaccine is unlikely to provide protection against novel H1N1 influenza, a vaccine for H1N1 is currently in production and is expected to be ready for the public in the fall. The H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine – it is intended to be used alongside seasonal flu vaccine, and will be recommended for certain at risk groups.

You can [get updates on H1N1 and read more about vaccine recommendations](#) on the CDC web site. We expect to have vaccines available in our clinics once they are ready, and are here to serve all your health care needs.

<http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1FLU/>

runny nose, post-nasal drainage and clearing of the throat.

Fortunately, there are good non-pharmacologic strategies to combat allergies, and when those aren't enough, effective medications are available.

Air conditioning in modern homes makes keeping windows closed an option, and that can help. However, pollens are so small that their counts in a house can be close to what they are outside, even in a tightly shuttered home. Using high-quality air filters, and changing them frequently, is a good idea. (On the road, roll up your windows and set your climate control to "circulate"—many newer cars will filter the air.) Sealing pillows and mattresses with hypoallergenic materials can aid house dust mite allergies. Pet dander allergy, however, is hard to remedy if Fido or Kitty lives indoors.

Effective medications are now available over the counter. The old standby Benadryl is available for nighttime use, and loratidine and cetirizine are non-sedating options during the day. Nasalcrom (cromolyn) is an excellent non-steroidal nasal spray that can be used indefinitely with or without oral medication. The next level of defense against allergies are the nasal steroids such as fluticasone, triamcinolone, mometasone, and others. These are prescription drugs that are used once a day to prevent nasal inflammation from any cause. If you're being bothered by allergies, discuss the problem with your physician.

Editor's Note: At the end of August, Dr. Zaunbrecher will be retiring after many years of service to UTMB and to his patients. Please join us in thanking and congratulating him.

Ten Tips for Pool Safety

by Dr. Saloni Majmudar, Texas City Pediatric Associates



On average, 70 children drown each year in Texas, according to statistics kept by the Department of Family and Protective Services. Unfortunately, we're on a pace to beat that average in 2009: by mid-summer, 60 children had already drowned in our state.

According to federal statistics, children under one year most often drown in bathtubs, buckets, or toilets. Children from one to four years drown most often in residential swimming pools. Most young children who drowned in pools were last seen in the home and had been out of sight less than five minutes.

Pools are a great way to beat the heat, and the swim season is still in full swing. Consider these pool and water safety tips to keep your family safe:

1. Kids need constant adult supervision while in or near any body

New island location for Pedi After-Hours Urgent Care

On Aug. 1, Island Pediatric Urgent Care moved from its location near the UTMB ER to 2027 61st St., in Galveston. As an after-hours pediatric urgent care clinic, the site is open weekdays from 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., weekends from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and holidays from noon to 8 p.m. The after-hours urgent care clinic treats children with cuts, coughs, scrapes, colds, fever, minor sports injuries, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, earaches, dehydration and abdominal pain. For more information, call 409-772-3695.

UTMB also operates a Pedi After-Hours Urgent Care site at 3023 Marina Bay Dr., in League City. (See link to [listing of all UTMB clinics](#) below.)

UTMB ER now open

The emergency room at UTMB in Galveston reopened Aug. 1; it'd been closed since Sept. 13 due to Hurricane Ike. Located at 901 Harborside Dr., the ER is receiving patients by both ground and air ambulance and offers the same level of trauma care it did prior to Hurricane Ike (with the exclusion of psychiatric care, for which no inpatient facilities are currently available). UTMB officials estimate that 44,000 people will be treated this year at its campus-based ER.



of water (including bath tubs, sinks, and other household containers). When infants or toddlers are in the water, adults need to be within touching distance. Children with disabilities or prone to seizures should never be allowed to swim alone.

2. Flotation devices, arm floats, and inflatable toys are not a replacement for attentive adult supervision.

3. The American Academy of Pediatricians recommends swim lessons after the age of four (younger children may not be developmentally ready to learn important water safety behaviors and may have a false and dangerous sense of security).

4. A pool needs to be isolated from the house by as many obstacles as possible. Fences need to be at least 4 feet high and have well maintained self-locking, self-latching gates that open out from the pool. Back-up protection like sensors and alarms are a great investment.

5. Keep a phone and safety equipment (like a life ring) near the pool.

6. Keep electrical appliances away from water, and don't allow swimming during a thunderstorm.

7. Don't let kids run around pools, teach them not to dive into shallow water, and not to drink pool water (they can be sickened by diseases like Giardiasis).

8. Parents and other caregivers should be trained in Infant/Child CPR. Classes are offered by the [American Red Cross](#) and typically take less than four hours.

9. Use a good sunscreen; reapply every 2 hours, or after swimming or sweating.

10. You can prevent swimmer's ear with a 50/50 solution of rubbing alcohol and distilled white vinegar; put a few drops into each ear after going swimming.

Medical Discovery News on KUHF

UTMB hosts a weekly radio spot, Medical Discovery News, that provides insights into a broad range of biomedical science topics. Recent episodes have focused on stem cell research, chemical warfare, meningitis and anesthesia. The shows are produced and hosted by Drs. Norbert Herzog and David Niesel, and broadcast by nearly 100 stations in the U.S. and Mexico. Locally, the show airs at 10 a.m. on Saturdays on KUHF, 88.7 FM., or can be [heard and read online](#).



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