**Image Gently: How you can reduce radiation exposure to your child**

Most radiation exposure is through background radiation each of us is exposed to just from living on earth. From the soil to the sun, radiation is a part of normal daily life.

Diagnostic tests that use radiation, like X-rays, CT scans, fluoroscopy, interventional radiology and nuclear medicine can save lives. But they should be done only if truly necessary, especially for children. While an X-ray may give off minimal radiation, tests like a CT scan may give a much higher dose.

**Why are children more susceptible to the effects of radiation?**

When a child is growing, the cells are dividing rapidly: It’s easier to injure a dividing cell. Also, the earlier any radiation dose occurs, the more time is given for any radiation-influenced changes to occur.

**Does a child receive a different amount of radiation than an adult?**

At Doernbecher, we have special guidelines for imaging children; they are not given the same amount of radiation as an adult.

**Is Doernbecher taking other steps to reduce radiation exposure?**

CT scanners used for children feature a new system of image reconstruction that improves the quality of an image even when a lower dose is used. This innovative technology has allowed us to reduce radiation dosage by 40-60 percent in our CT scans.*

In addition, Doernbecher trauma and ED physicians have eliminated cervical spine CT scans as an initial mode of imaging diagnosis for pediatric trauma patients.

**How are patients protected during tests?**

When possible, the technologist will shield parts of the body that are outside the imaged area, so they are not exposed to radiation.

**Are there other tests that don’t involve radiation that can be used on my child?**

MRI and ultrasound procedures do not involve radiation. An X-ray involves an extremely small amount of radiation. Ask your doctor if there are other tests that can help your child. Also, if your child does require a CT scan, excess radiation can be avoided. Examinations are repeated only when necessary.

**What does “Image Gently” mean?**

“Image Gently” simply refers to being conservative about radiation dosage in children. Sometimes a different exam or watchful observation may suffice without the need for a test.

**How can I learn more?**

Doernbecher has radiologists who specialize in pediatric care. If you’ve got a question about your child’s procedures, don’t hesitate to contact Doernbecher at 503 346-0640 or 888 346-0645.

*Brain CT excepted.