First Family Camp a Winner!

Since 1989 128 pediatric heart transplants have been done at the University of Alberta Hospital/Stollery Children's Hospital. These children live throughout Western Canada; many of them have never met another heart transplant recipient. September 23-25, 2011 the first ever heart transplant family camp was held at Lac St. Anne hosted by Camp Warwa. Staff from both the Alberta Children's Hospital and Stollery Children's Hospital worked to provided educational events, support groups and fun in a relaxed camp atmosphere. 13 transplant families and 10 staff and their families enjoyed the balmy fall weather by the lake. Some of the highlights included the soccer tournament and the mini Olympics. The overall winners of the camp Olympics were the Calgary transplant team who beat out Edmonton by two points to win the coveted Transplant Cup.

RESEARCH WATCH

Family camp was not all fun and games! Participants filled out surveys and contributed to an evaluation of the camp. We found that parents wanted to know more about the latest in research and treatment innovation, so research in pediatric heart transplantation will be a regular update in our newsletter. One of the best things reported about the camp for kids with a transplant was the fun of the varied recreational activities. People enjoyed spending time together as a family, which appears to suggest that Family Camp is one way to contribute the needs of the whole family.

Our newest research study has just been launched! It involved the activation and evaluation of an online support network for parents of kids with a heart or liver transplant. The study is looking at whether or not an online support group is helpful. If we can prove that the support and education provided over the internet is helpful, we can then ask for funding to support this as a regular part of the program for families. If you are not yet a part of this online network and would like to join (or if you just would like more information about it), feel free to be in touch with Bernadette or David Nicholas at 780-492-8094.
Finding some light in the dark

As winter closes in, it sometimes feels like the darkness surrounds us, we need to find a little light.

What can you do this year to light up the winter doldrums? The first step is taking advantage of the light. On weekends try to plan some activity for being outside in the sunshine. We are lucky in the prairies that often we have blue sky despite the snow and colder temperatures. Dress for the weather and get outside, try tobogganing, snowshoeing, or skating. Look in your local paper for winter festivals and other opportunities to be part of the community. There are often fun things to do locally to forget about the weather for a bit, swimming, especially a nice, warm beach like experience like a wave pool can be a lot of fun in the middle of February. Have you tried a trail ride in the snow? Riding through the woods with a warm horse under you in the frosty air can be especially beautiful.

Fun Free Outings: Window shopping in Chinatown, Indoor Farmers Markets, WEM, Winter Lights (winterlight.ca), skating at Hawrelak Park or Rundle Park

When it is just too cold to go outside plan a series of movies, have Shrek day, wear your jammies all day, make popcorn and hot chocolate and have some fun at home. Get the kids involved in making cookies or even making supper. I know there will be a mess to clean but sometimes the smiling faces are worth it.

Fluid Management

Drinking enough water and fluids to keep your kidneys well flushed is one of the bigger problems kids have after transplant. Keep a sport bottle handy with fresh water so you can sip all day. If the school won’t let you drink in the classroom let us know so we can send them a letter. It is very important to keep your kidneys healthy after transplant and to avoid kidney problems as you grow.

Kidney Damage

- Drink water –for 10kg child=1000ml/day, 15kg=1250ml/day, 20kg=1500ml/day
- Void 5-6 times per day
- Urine should be nearly colourless and odourless, if not drink more.

Transplant Games 2012 Come to Calgary!

July 2012 the 6th Canadian Transplant Games will be held, the Alberta chapter of the Canadian Transplant Association is the planning committee, get involved.

The CTA Introduces Two Special Youth Awards; one is a National Award and the other a Provincial Award.

These awards are in place to recognize outstanding achievement of Canada’s young transplant recipients.

www.organ-donation-works.org