



# Grassroots Campaign Creates Awareness for Lowering Pediatric Dose

It is already late in the evening when a six year-old child is brought to the emergency room after a serious car accident. She's awake and coherent but complaining about severe abdominal pain. The ED physician is greatly concerned about internal injuries or bleeding, and orders a CT scan to diagnose the patient's condition.

Before the child is brought into the CT scanning room, the CT technologist pulls the patient chart, reviews her weight and size and, through the Color Coding for Kids feature on the GE Healthcare LightSpeed® VCT, selects the appropriate child-size CT scanning protocol. Thanks in large part to the Image Gently<sup>SM</sup> campaign from the Alliance for Radiation Safety in Pediatric Imaging, radiologists and technologists have become aware of the need to "child-size" adult protocols. As a result, technologists now know to access child-friendly protocols available on GE's LightSpeed and BrightSpeed® CT scanners to help them deliver the appropriate "child-size" radiation dose to pediatric patients.

## Image Gently

The Image Gently campaign is the result of a grassroots effort initiated by pediatric radiologists concerned about the use of adult CT protocols on children. According to Marilyn Goske, MD, Chair, Society for Pediatric Radiology (SPR) and Alliance Chair, "This initiative has come about because of the passion of many members and volunteers concerned about improving children's health."

The Alliance began as a subcommittee within SPR in 2006 and was almost immediately supported by an unrestricted educational grant from GE Healthcare. "I firmly believe that having the support and appropriate involvement of GE Healthcare early on helped us get started," Dr. Goske says.

In early 2007, three other organizations joined the Alliance – the American College of Radiology, the American Society of Radiologic Technologists, and the American Association of Physicists in Medicine. Founding members of the Alliance convened at Cincinnati Children's Hospital in July 2007 and developed the concept and messaging campaign. This group then reached out to other professional organizations, swelling the Alliance to a consortium of 13 medical societies. (A complete list of Alliance Organizations is available on the Image Gently Web site.)

"Our guiding force is a simple statement – Image Gently," explains Dr. Goske, "and our mission is to change practice by educating the entire care team – radiologists, technologists, medical physicists, and referring physicians – about the importance of lowering radiation dose in children."

The rapid growth of CT pediatric imaging led the Alliance to focus first on this modality. "CT scans save lives but we need to be as prudent as possible when imaging children," Dr. Goske adds.



Marilyn Goske, MD, is a radiologist at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and professor at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. In January 2008, she was named the Dr. Frederic N. and Carolyn Silverman Endowed Chair for Radiology Education at Cincinnati Children's. As Chair for the Alliance for Radiation Safety in Pediatric Imaging, Dr. Goske was instrumental in forming the Image Gently initiative.

Dr. Goske earned her medical degree at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and completed her residency in diagnostic radiology and fellowship in pediatric radiology at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, NY, an affiliate of the University of Rochester. Dr. Goske has also completed a fellowship in medical education at The Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine's Division of Education.

Dr. Goske is a member and past president of the Society for Pediatric Radiology, as well as a member of numerous medical associations including RSNA and ACR. In 2008, Dr. Goske was honored as one of the Best Doctors in America by Best Doctors, Inc.,

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*– Dr. Marilyn Goske*

The Image Gently message has three key points.

1. Child size the kVp and mA.
2. One single phase scan is often enough.
3. Scan only the indicated area.

The Alliance provides support to institutions seeking to develop pediatric CT protocols. Guidelines, instructions, and a dose worksheet are available online at [www.imagegently.org](http://www.imagegently.org), where healthcare providers can also take the Image Gently pledge. According to the American College of Radiology, over 250 facilities took the pledge on January 22, 2008, the first day of the campaign. One year later, nearly 1,600 medical professionals have taken the pledge and the protocol has been downloaded over 6,000 times.

“We urge radiologists who typically scan adult patients to child size their CT dose. They can also go to our Web site, learn more, and actively engage their institution’s medical physicist in developing protocols for children,” Dr. Goske says. The universal CT protocols recommended by the Alliance are independent of scanner age, make, and model.

“Radiologists have told us that they want to do the right thing and are grateful for this national effort,” Dr. Goske adds, “and the information on our Web site provides them the necessary educational materials to implement this initiative in their institution.” ■

#### Five steps to improving patient care

1. Increase awareness for the need to decrease CT radiation dose to children.
2. Sign the pledge and commit to changing your daily practice by working as a team with technologists, physicists, referring physicians, and parents.
3. Review adult protocols and use the CT protocols available on the Alliance’s Web site to downsize children protocols.
4. Single phase scans are usually acceptable.
5. Scan only the indicated area.

Source: The Alliance for Radiation Safety in Pediatric Imaging. Available at [www.imagegently.org](http://www.imagegently.org)