

Project Case Report

My patient came to a clinic visit with Dr. Ellis for ear pain. Upon eliciting a history, I discovered that his main daytime activities were swimming and biking. After a further history and exam, the diagnosis of otitis externa was made. The otitis externa requires that he not swim for the next 5 days. This cut his daily activities down to mostly biking. I found that he had needs in the Injury Prevention category. Some of his play was not supervised, and his play was not in areas free of hazards. This puts the patient (8), and his sisters (7 and 6), and cousin (11) at risk for accidental injury, a leading cause of childhood death.

When discussing his swimming in the context of his swimmer's ear, I asked about supervision. He and his family all know how to swim, and can only swim when they are supervised, mostly by his grandfather. The playtime with the least amount of supervision is biking. They are supposed to bike only on the sidewalk, but mostly bike around in the busy parking lot of the complex where they live. Of more concern is that much of the parking lot traffic is UW students. Although there haven't been any bike accidents yet, we identified this area as the area of most risk for the children. I offered to obtain bike helmets for the children and to make an appointment at Dr. Ellis' clinic to fit the bike helmets for all of the children.

On 08/27/03, a follow-up appointment was tentatively scheduled for 8/29/03. The appointment was tentatively scheduled because the grandmother was not sure when a different appointment for her granddaughter was scheduled that day. I called the grandmother on 08/28/03 to confirm the appointment, but she was still unsure. Later that afternoon we decided that if she needed to cancel the appointment she should call the clinic. I called the clinic back and left my pager number in the event of a cancellation. Also that afternoon, I watched the video from Helmets R Us on how to fit a helmet properly. The following morning, with no message of cancellation, I brought the helmets over to the clinic and awaited their arrival—which was right on time. I properly fitted the helmets and discussed important safety points that were also available in the brochure I gave them from the Safe Kids Coalition. At the end I thanked the grandfather for bringing the kids in, saying that I understood how valuable everyone's time is, and he commented that the

most important thing is the children's safety. On 9/9/03 I called their home and spoke to the grandmother. She stated that the children wear their bike helmets every time they ride their bikes. I feel that the goal was met very successfully, and I sincerely hope that I made the children's play a little more safe.

The most important lesson I learned doing this project was the willingness the patient and his family had to be helped. They were very eager to talk about a way to get them all bike helmets, and were not ashamed that they didn't already have helmets. Also, the enthusiasm the kids showed about wearing their helmets (they were practicing running into the exam table with the helmets on) was very encouraging. A barrier I encountered was trying to get a time for them to meet at the clinic for the helmet fitting. Their phone was not answered on a regular basis, and there is something just short of chaos in the background that frequently disrupted the grandmother's attention.

Family Resource:

National Safe Kids Campaign
1301 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004-1707
(202) 662-0600
www.safekids.org

Helmets R Us
2705 Pacific Ave
Tacoma, WA 98402
(253) 627-2121

The National Safe Kids Campaign educates children and their caregivers on safety for bikes, scooters, inline skates and skateboards. It provides a flyer on the rules of the roads, proper helmet use, and proper gear for each activity. It also provides free helmets—bike helmets for kids who just bike and all-sport helmets for kids who also use scooters, inline skates or skateboards. The only criterion necessary for receiving a free bike helmet is to not have one already.