



Harris County Hospital District

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MEDIA RELEASE

Those “Must-Have” Shoes for Fall Could Lead to Foot Problems

HOUSTON (Sept. 18, 2006) – Fall fashions are here and you’re eyeing a pair of shiny red patent stiletto heels. They’ll be perfect with the new outfit you just bought. You just have to have them.

As you walk away from the counter toting your four-inch heels, you fantasize about all of the great outfits you can wear them with and everywhere you can wear them – a party, out to dinner – anywhere!

What most women don’t think about when they’re in shoe heaven is the havoc those “must have heels” might inflict on their feet.

High heels are one of the biggest causes of foot problems in women. Wearing them on a daily basis and for long periods of time can cause significant pain and lead to serious medical issues.

“The foot was not made to bear all the weight on the front of the foot,” said Dr. Michael Z. Metzger, a podiatrist at Martin Luther King Health Center, part of the Harris County Hospital District. “If women wear heels too often, they can develop bunions, hammertoes, arch pain and calf pain.” In addition, constantly wearing high heels can cause the Achilles tendon to shorten, resulting in a foot that is permanently arched.

If women must wear high heels, Metzger suggests changing to a low-heeled shoe or tennis shoes when walking. Wearing high-heeled shoes for a prolonged period of time can cause back and neck strain, leading to changes in posture.

“It’s fine to wear high heels to some extent, but not every day,” Metzger said. “I suggest not wearing heels higher than three inches. Most importantly, don’t wear them when you have a great deal of walking to do and certainly don’t wear them through pain.”

The Harris County Hospital District is the public health care system for the nation’s third most populous county. It provides more than 1.1 million health care visits each year to uninsured, underinsured and medically needy residents of Harris County. The Hospital District operates Ben Taub General Hospital, Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital, Quentin Mease Community Hospital, 12 community health centers, a dental center, eight school-based clinics, 13 homeless shelter clinics and four mobile health units.

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