



Winter Colds

Colds are caused by viruses. Healthy children average 6 colds per year. 5-10% of children develop a bacterial complication such as an ear or sinus infection.

When your child has a cold, the linings of the nose and sinus cavity swell and produce more fluid than usual. This is why the nose gets congested and runny.

Normal cold symptoms include fever that can last up to 3 days, sore throat, nasal discharge and congestion that can be clear, watery or thicker, white, yellow, or green and last up to 14 days, and cough which often gets worse at night.

Reasons to visit the doctor include: earache, fever present for more than 3 days, fever that goes away for more than 24 hours, then returns, nasal discharge present for more than 2 weeks, or cough present for more than 3 weeks.

How to Treat a Cold:

For Runny Noses

The nasal mucus is washing viruses and bacteria out of the nose and sinuses. Blowing the nose or nasal suction for younger children is all that is needed. Apply petroleum jelly to the nasal openings to protect them from irritation.

For a Blocked Nose

Use warm water or saline nose drops to loosen dried mucus. Wash the nose 4 times per day or whenever your child can't breathe through the nose. To make your own saline drops add 1/2 tsp table salt to 8oz of warm water. Follow the wash with gentle bulb suction.

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What an amazing fall we have had thus far!

As the seasons change, we wanted to get some more information out to you on your child's health and safety throughout the next couple of months. In this on-line addition of our newsletter, you can find information on winter exercise, winter safety, and the ubiquitous cold! We are also featuring our triage nurse, Dineen, without whom all of our lives would be a lot more chaotic. With colds and flu arriving, we wanted to remind you about our walk-in time for sick visits. From 8 to 9 a.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and from 8 to 8:30 a.m. on Thursdays, patients will be seen on a first-come, first-serve basis. This is a perfect time to come in if your child has a new problem, but you will likely be better served making an appointment to see your regular doctor for chronic issues. In other exciting news, we'll be doing some minor renovations in our Stamford office soon. This will not affect our regular office hours. Best wishes for safe and healthy fall and winter seasons!

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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Winter Safety Tips

Whether winter brings severe storms, light dustings or just cold temperatures, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has some valuable tips on how to keep your children safe and warm.

What to Wear

- ❑ Dress infants and children warmly for outdoor activities. Several thin layers will keep them dry and warm. Clothing for children should consist of thermal long johns, turtlenecks, one or two shirts, pants, sweater, coat, warm socks, boots, gloves or mittens, and a hat.
- ❑ The rule of thumb for older babies and young children is to dress them in one more layer of clothing than an adult would wear in the same conditions.
- ❑ Blankets, quilts, pillows, sheepskins and other loose bedding may contribute to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and should be kept out of an infant's sleeping environment. Sleep clothing like one-piece sleepers is preferred.
- ❑ If a blanket must be used to keep a sleeping infant warm, it should be tucked in around the crib mattress, reaching only as far as your baby's chest, so the infant's face is less likely to become covered by bedding.



Hypothermia

- ❑ Hypothermia develops when a child's temperature falls below normal due to exposure to cold. It often happens when a youngster is playing outdoors in extremely cold weather without wearing proper clothing.
- ❑ As hypothermia sets in, the child may shiver and become lethargic and clumsy. His speech may become slurred and his body temperature will decline.
- ❑ If you suspect your child is hypothermic, call 911 at once. Until help arrives, take the child indoors, remove any wet clothing, and wrap him in blankets or warm clothes.

Frostbite

- ❑ Frostbite happens when the skin and outer tissues become frozen. This condition tends to happen on extremities like the fingers, toes, ears and nose. They may become pale, gray and blistered. At the same time, the child may complain that her skin burns or has become numb.
- ❑ If frostbite occurs, bring the child indoors and place the frostbitten parts of her body in warm (not hot) water. 104° Fahrenheit (about the temperature of most hot tubs) is recommended. Warm washcloths may be applied to frostbitten nose, ears and lips.
- ❑ Do not rub the frozen areas.
- ❑ After a few minutes, dry and cover him with clothing or blankets. Give him something warm to drink.
- ❑ If the numbness continues for more than a few minutes, call your doctor.

Winter Health

- ❑ If your child suffers from winter nosebleeds, try using a cold air humidifier in the child's room at night. Saline nose drops may help keep tissues moist. If bleeding is severe or recurrent, consult your pediatrician.
- ❑ Many pediatricians feel that bathing two or three times a week is enough for an infant's first year. More frequent baths may dry out the skin, especially during the winter.
- ❑ Cold weather does not cause colds or flu. But the viruses that cause colds and flu tend to be more common in the winter, when children are in school and are in closer contact with each other. Frequent hand washing and teaching your child to sneeze or cough into the bend of her elbow may help reduce the risk of colds and flu.
- ❑ Children between the ages of 6 and 59 months should get the influenza vaccine to reduce their risk of catching the flu.



Staying Active in the Cold Weather

The percentage of overweight kids has more than doubled over the last 30 years. Although many factors contribute to this epidemic, kids are becoming more sedentary. This is particularly a problem in the winter season. Once it gets cold outside our bodies begin to want to conserve energy to use as heat. We tend to eat a little more and become less active. Being cooped up inside and leading a sedentary lifestyle can lead to fatigue and boredom.

Everyone can benefit from regular exercise. Kids who are active will have stronger muscles and bones and a leaner body. They are also less likely to become overweight, have a lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes, lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and have a better outlook on life. Kids who are physically fit also sleep better and are better able to handle the physical and emotional challenges that a typical day presents.

One of the best ways to get kids to be more active is to limit the amount of time spent in sedentary activities, especially watching TV or playing video games. The AAP recommends that children under the age of 2 years watch no TV at all and that screen time should be limited to no more than 1 to 2 hours a day for kids age 2 and older.

Young kids should not be inactive for prolonged periods of time- no more than 1 hour unless they are sleeping and school-age children should not be inactive for periods longer than 2 hours.

The American Heart Association recommends that children age 2 and older should get at least 60 minutes of exercise on most, but preferably all, days of the week.

Tips to get your child moving:

- Help your child participate in a variety of activities that are age appropriate.
- Establish a regular schedule for physical activity.
- Incorporate activity into daily routines, such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator and parking far from the entrance to a store.
- Embrace a healthier lifestyle as a role model to your children.
- Keep it fun so your child will come back for more.
- Get the entire family involved- take weekly walks, hikes, or bike rides.
- Assign your child household chores such as yard work or walking the dog.
- Many kids avoid exercise because it's geared towards sports and competition. Dancing, yoga, and martial arts are all activities that are well-suited for the non-athletic child.

Winter is actually a great time to get outside and keep fit and spend time together as a family, whether it's just having a snowball fight or trying a new sport, such as skiing, snowboarding, or ice skating. Snowshoeing is an activity that doesn't require any particular skills or specialized equipment and can be done almost anywhere there is snow. It's a great way to workout and the slower pace allows family members to stay together.

Lifestyles learned as children are likely to stay with a person into adulthood. If physical activities are a family priority, they will provide children with a foundation for a lifetime of health.

Sources: kidshealth.org and American Heart Association



Holiday Safety

Artificial trees

- ❑ Look for a statement specifying that it's fire resistant. This doesn't mean the tree will not catch fire, but it will resist burning and will extinguish quickly.
- ❑ Real trees- A fresh tree will be less of a fire hazard than a dry one. A fresh tree is green, the needles are hard to pull from branches and do not break between your fingers, and trunk butt is sticky w/ resin.
- ❑ Place the tree at least 3 ft away from fireplaces, radiators.

Lights

- ❑ Only use lights that have been tested for safety- noted by a label from an independent testing factory.
- ❑ Check each set of lights for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, and loose connections.
- ❑ Turn off all lights on trees before going to bed or leaving house- lights could short and start a fire.
- ❑ Don't use electric lights on a metal tree.

Other Decorations

- ❑ Artificial snow should always be applied with adequate ventilation. Inhaling the propellants and solvents from the can or spraying the aerosol near the eyes can cause injury.
- ❑ Seasonal holiday plants should be kept out of a child's reach. Mistletoe and holly berries can be poisonous if large amounts are swallowed. Berries and leaves can cause nausea, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and weakness.
- ❑ In homes with small children avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food, and make sure decorations are not made of lead.

Fires

- ❑ Be careful with "fire salts" that produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires- they contain heavy metals, which can cause gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten.
- ❑ Don't burn paper in fireplace- a flash fire can result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.
- ❑ Burning evergreens in fireplace can be hazardous- when dry, greens can cause flames that can flare out of control and send sparks flying into room or up chimney.

Toys

- ❑ When your child gets a new toy, read warning labels that accompany it.
- ❑ Get rid of plastic wrap or packaging that might suffocate an infant.
- ❑ Pay attention to recommended ages on package.
- ❑ Keep toys belonging to an older sibling away from a younger one.
- ❑ Check toys for broken or torn parts that can pose hazards such as choking or cuts.
- ❑ Watch for toy recalls that affect you. Fill out product registration cards and send them in so you can be notified about recalls.
- ❑ Teach your child that electric toys should not be used around water.

COLDS

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If the air in the home is dry, use a humidifier in your child's room. Be sure to clean the humidifier often to prevent mold and bacteria build-up.

Most cold medicines are not helpful. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommends that over the counter cough and cold medicines not be given to children younger than 6 years due to risk of life-threatening side effects. Also, studies show that these products don't work.

Antibiotics will not help. The body needs to fight the virus on its own.

For Cough

Children over 5 years old can use cough drops. Try honey- 1/2 tsp for age 2-5 yrs; 1 tsp for age 6-12 yrs; 2 tsp for those > 12 y/o.

When to Return to School- when the fever is gone and your child feels well enough to participate in normal activities.

How to Prevent Colds:

Keep hands clean by washing several times per day, especially before eating. Keep hands away from eyes, nose, and mouth. Avoid sharing utensils, drinking cups, toothbrushes, and towels. Wash dishes and utensils in hot, soapy water. Open the windows when the weather is nice. Frequently clean doorknobs, light switches, and telephones. Don't let anyone smoke in the house.

Winter Sports and Activities

Set reasonable time limits on outdoor play to prevent frostbite. Have children come inside periodically to warm up.

Ice Skating

- Allow children to skate only on approved surfaces. Check for signs posted by local police or recreation departments, or call your local police department to find out which areas have been approved.
- Advise your child to: skate in the same direction as the crowd; avoid darting across the ice; never skate alone; not chew gum or eat candy while skating.
- Consider having your child wear a helmet while ice skating.

Sledding

- Keep sledders away from motor vehicles.
- Children should be supervised while sledding.
- Keep young children separated from older children.
- Sledding feet first or sitting up, instead of lying down head-first, may prevent head injuries.
- Consider having your child wear a helmet while sledding.
- Use steerable sleds, not snow disks or inner tubes.
- Sleds should be structurally sound and free of sharp edges and splinters, and the steering mechanism should be well lubricated.
- Sled slopes should be free of obstructions like trees or fences, be covered in snow not ice, not be too steep (slope of less than 30°), and end with a flat runoff.
- Avoid sledding in crowded areas.

Snow Skiing and Snowboarding

- Children should be taught to ski or snowboard by a qualified instructor in a program designed for children.
- Never ski or snowboard alone.
- Young children should always be supervised by an adult. Older children's need for adult supervision depends on their maturity and skill. If older children are not with an adult, they should always at least be accompanied by a friend.
- The AAP recommends that children under age 7 not snowboard.
- Consider wearing a helmet.

- Equipment should fit the child. Skiers should wear safety bindings that are adjusted at least every year. Snowboarders should wear gloves with built-in wrist guards.
- Slopes should fit the ability and experience of the skier or snowboarder. Avoid crowded slopes.
- Avoid skiing in areas with trees and other obstacles.

Snowmobiling

- The AAP recommends that children under age 16 not operate snowmobiles and that children under age 6 never ride on snowmobiles.
- Do not use a snowmobile to pull a sled or skiers.
- Wear goggles and a safety helmet approved for use on motorized vehicles like motorcycles.
- Travel at safe speeds.
- Never use alcohol or other drugs before or during snowmobiling.
- Never snowmobile alone or at night.
- Stay on marked trails, away from roads, water, railroads and pedestrians.

Sun Protection

- The sun's rays can still cause sunburn in the winter, especially when they reflect off snow. Make sure to cover your child's exposed skin with sunscreen.

Fire Protection

Winter is a time when household fires occur. It is a good time to remember to:

- Buy and install smoke alarms on every floor of your home.
- Test smoke alarms monthly.
- Practice fire drills with your children.





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EMPLOYEE Spotlight

Dineen - Our Triage Nurse



“Good afternoon, this is Dineen, the triage nurse. How can I help you today?”

To many of the patients here at Stamford Pediatric Associates this is a familiar refrain. My name is Dineen LaDore and I am the triage nurse for Stamford Pediatric Associates. You may have called me ‘Diane...Denise...

Jeannine’ - it’s OK, my name is unique and sometimes a challenge to pronounce. I know it’s me you are calling for!

I have worked for SPA for 7 ½ years, the past 6 as the triage nurse. I received my BSN from Northeastern University in 1996, and have worked in pediatric nursing since graduating. My previous nursing experience was in a Neonatal ICU.

I have been married to Scott, my best friend, for almost 10 years. We have 2 children – Francesca, who is 6 and in 1st grade, and Gavin, who is 5 and in Kindergarten. As a family we love camping, the outdoors and the NY Mets! Personally, my hobbies include cooking and baking, reading and volunteering. I am a Girl Scout leader for Francesca’s Daisy troop, a 6th grade catechist, and a member of the PTO board and Health/Wellness Committee at my children’s school.

Being the triage nurse is a great job. As a parent myself, I can reassure others with my experiences both as a nurse and a mom. I think one of the most comforting things I can say to a parent is that “I’ve been there too”. It’s great to be able to meet the patients in person when they come into the office. I consider many of you good friends, we talk so often! Whether we have spoken once a month, or several times a week, I would love to meet you. My triage area is in the Stamford office, right across from room #8.

Please come by and say hi the next time you visit us!

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