



## From DMA Pediatrician Rachel Agrin-Silva, M.D., and the American Academy of Pediatrics

Whether winter brings severe storms, light dustings or just cold temperatures, here are 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 shirts, pants, sweater, coat, warm socks, boots, gloves or mittens, and a hat. Children who are being active outdoors may need less clothing than children who are not moving as much while outdoors.
- 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 are 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.

### 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 months. Soap may also dry out the skin and may not be needed for young infants.
- Cold weather does not cause colds or flu. But the viruses that cause colds and flu tend to be more common in the winter, especially when children are in school and are in closer

### TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT:

**Y**ou can make an appointment with any Dedham Medical physician simply by calling the central number – 781-329-1400 – and asking for his or her office or department. If you don't have a particular caregiver in mind, we will be happy to match you to an appropriate provider. We have two convenient locations – One Lyons St. in Dedham and 325 River Ridge Dr. in Norwood. Both have free parking.

If hospital services are needed, our physicians are on the staffs of several of the region's outstanding facilities, including Brigham/Faulkner, Newton-Wellesley and Children's Hospitals and the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary.

Dedham Medical accepts most major health insurance plans, including Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Tufts Health Plan, Tufts Medicare Preferred, HMO Blue, Medicare and others.

DMA uses an electronic medical record (EMR), which enables your healthcare provider to have immediate access to your health information. This improves patient safety and our ability to deliver high-quality, well-coordinated care.

contact with each other. Frequent hand washing and teaching your child to sneeze or cough into the bend of her/his elbow may help reduce the risk of colds and flu.

- Over-the-counter cold and flu medicines are not advised for children less than 6 years of age, unless specifically recommended by your pediatrician.

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- All children between the ages of 6 months and 18 years of age should get the influenza vaccine to reduce their risk of catching the flu, which is a serious illness that is different from a common cold. Any child with an underlying medical condition including (but not limited to) asthma is especially at risk of complications from the flu. Adults caring for infants and young children should also receive the flu vaccine. To schedule an appointment for your child to receive the flu vaccine at DMA, please call 781-329-1400.
- If your child is above age 2 and does not have a history of wheezing or asthma, a nasal spray instead of an injection may be the right choice for flu protection.
- For more flu information, please visit: [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu) or call the CDC Flu Information Line at (800) CDCINFO.

### WINTER SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

- Set reasonable time limits on outdoor play to prevent hypothermia and frostbite. Have children come inside periodically to warm up. And on days when the weather isn't good, find active indoor activities to keep your family healthy and fit throughout the year.

### 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, to never skate alone and not to chew gum or eat candy while skating.

### 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.
- An adult should always supervise young children. 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.
- Wearing a helmet is recommended
- 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.
- Avoid skiing in areas with trees and other obstacles, such as crowds.

### 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.
- Sled slopes should be free of obstructions like trees or fences, should not be icy, in a crowded area, or too steep and should end with a flat run-off.

### 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.



**P**ediatrician Rachel Agrin-Silva, M.D., received her medical degree from the University of California, San Francisco and completed a combined residency at Boston Medical Center and the Children's Hospital, Boston. She is board certified in Pediatrics and practices at DMA's Norwood facility.

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