



Winter 2009 - 2010

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What's new at SPA?

SPA now has a weight management program for children and adolescents who have a body mass index (BMI) that is above the 85 percentile for age. The program is being overseen by Dr Schneider and patients meet regularly with Karen Adams, CPNP or Shari Kehres, CPNP for office visits. The program goal is to identify children who are currently overweight and/or are at risk for developing weight-related health problems. The program is comprehensive and addresses genetic, biological, behavioral and cultural influences that lead to unhealthy weight gain. Also assisting us in our program is Elyse Gerard (Girls Getting Stronger). Elyse is a fitness trainer who is experienced in working with children and adolescents with exercise and weight issues. Learn more about Elyse's background and the services that she provides by visiting www.venus4her.com.

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Winter is here! What a beautiful and joyful time of year it can be! So whether you and your child are simply walking outdoors, gazing at pristine wintery landscapes, or sledding down a snow covered hill, here are a few important health and safety issues that you may want to know about.

Protect your family from hypothermia and frostbite

Hypothermia can occur when the body temperature drops from its normal temperature of 98.6 degrees F to below 95 degrees. Although most cases of hypothermia occur with prolonged outdoor exposure to temperatures below freezing, twenty percent of death related cases occur indoors. A person can become hypothermic when in temperatures as high as 50 degrees F. This is most likely to happen as a result of shivering due to exposure from rain, perspiration, or submersion in cold water. How quickly and at what temperature a person can develop symptoms of hypothermia will depend on the age, overall health, and length of time exposed. Children under the age of 2 years and the elderly are most at risk.

Warning signs of hypothermia

Children and adolescents:

- Shivering / exhaustion / muscle weakness
- Confusion / slurred speech
- Drowsiness / loss of consciousness
- Slowed pulse

Infants:

- Bright red cold skin
- Weak cry / low energy

What to do if a person is showing signs of hypothermia

- Call 911 / get medical attention immediately

If medical attention is not available:

- Get the person into a warm area
- Remove any wet clothing

- Slowly warm the center of the body first by having the victim drink warm liquids. Warming the extremities before the center will cause the cooled blood to circulate through the heart which could result in heart failure
- After the body temperature has increased, keep the person wrapped in a warm blanket and seek medical attention as soon as possible.



Frostbite is another potentially serious medical condition that can result from exposure to cold weather below 32 degrees F.

Depending on the temperature it can happen in minutes.

Frostbite occurs when the skin and tissues beneath the skin start to freeze. As a result of this freezing process, ice crystals form and prevent oxygen from getting to the tissues.

Without timely medical intervention, this can lead to tissue death (gangrene). Although frostbite can occur anywhere on the body, the fingers, toes, face, ears, and nose are the areas affected most often.

People who have the greatest risk for developing frostbite are infants and younger children and the elderly. Also, individuals with medical conditions that impair circulation such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease are more susceptible.

During the initial stages of frostbite (also known as frost nip), the affected skin may tingle, sting, or have a mild burning sensation. The skin may become inflamed and appear white, red, or yellow in color. As frostbite progresses and the damage becomes more severe, the skin may feel hard and numbness may set in. Pain can also occur as blisters develop. During the final stages of frostbite, the skin becomes waxy/rubbery in texture and appears dark blue or black as the cells begin to die.

continued on back

Do you know...

According to the most recent data from the National Health and Nutritional Examination Survey, seventeen percent of children and adolescents in the United States meet the criteria for being overweight / obese and up to 34 percent are at risk for being overweight. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) defines obesity / overweight as being at or above the 95 percentile Body Mass Index (BMI) for age and "at risk for being overweight" as BMI over the 85 percentile for age. Obesity occurs when caloric intake exceeds energy expenditure. The etiology of obesity cannot be attributed to one cause. Factors include genetics, lifestyle preferences, cultural influences, diet and nutrition and, in a small number of cases, metabolic deficiencies. Obesity should be addressed as early as possible since it can lead to a multitude of health problems such as high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. Since recent studies have also shown that children who are overweight in the preteen years have an 80 percent chance of being overweight as adults, prevention is the best treatment. This can be accomplished by healthy eating habits, exercising on a regular basis, and keeping yearly health exam appointments. For more information on current government dietary and exercise recommendations visit www.dietaryguidelines.gov



hypothermia & Frostbite article continued



Treatment of frostbite

If frostbite is in the initial stage, it can be treated at home. Once it has progressed beyond the initial stage, seek medical attention immediately. Otherwise proceed as follows:

- Get into a warm area as soon as possible
- Do not walk on frostbitten feet or toes. This can cause more damage .
- Immerse the affected area in warm (not hot) water. DO NOT warm affected area if there is a possibility of refreezing.
- Do not massage affected area or rub it with snow. This will only cause more damage.

Prevention of hypothermia and frostbite

- Dress in layers. Wool, silk, or polypropylene fabrics will hold heat better than cotton. The outermost layer of clothing should be water resistant. Wear a hat, scarf, and gloves or mittens (mittens retain heat better than gloves). Remove layers if sweating occurs.
- Be aware of the National Weather Service advisories regarding wind chill and rain
- Dress your child in bright colors (other than white) in snowy conditions.
- Keep infants indoors if the outdoor temperature is below 40 degrees F.

Do you know the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in this country. According to the Centers for Disease Control, it is responsible for 500 deaths and 15,000 visits to the emergency room annually. CO is an odorless, colorless gas produced by fuel-burning appliances. Mild to moderate levels of CO poisoning can be

mistaken for the flu, food poisoning, or other viral-like illnesses. High levels of CO can cause death within minutes. One should be suspicious of CO poisoning when a person seems to have several bouts with flu-like symptoms or has symptoms that dissipate when outside or away from the home. Symptoms frequently affect the entire family.

Symptoms of CO poisoning are as follows:

- Headaches
- Dizziness / nausea
- Shortness of breath / chest pain
- Fatigue / drowsiness
- Impaired memory or judgment

If you or anyone in your family presents with the symptoms of CO poisoning, seek medical attention immediately. Open all windows in the house and turn off all appliances that have an open flame (such as furnaces, space heaters, water heaters, etc.) Prevent CO poisoning by installing carbon monoxide detectors and have appliances inspected according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

More on winter safety...

According to recent data by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than a quarter million children are injured each year while participating in winter sports. The majority of winter sports injuries occur while skiing and sledding. Head injuries are the most serious of all injuries that occur during these sports, and more than half of these could have been prevented if a helmet had been worn. The CPSC recommends wearing a sport specific helmet that is certified by either the Snell Memorial Foundation or ASTM International.

For more information on helmet recommendations and winter sports safety in general visit <http://www.usa.safekids.org/>

