

ManageYour Health



WINTER 2015

A publication of Texas Children's Health Plan

In this ISSUE

- 2 Freeze out the flu
- 3 What to do when you're sick and blue
- 4 Surviving the holidays with ADHD
- 5 Can the weather affect your asthma?
- 6 Baked Apples

Events listed on back cover.

CM-1115-229

Take charge of your health care with our new **Member Portal**

Now you can have your health care information at your fingertips. Texas Children's Health Plan is thrilled to announce the launch of our Member Portal.

This new, interactive tool lets you play an active role in your health care. You can now change your main doctor, keep track of your appointments, access your shot records and so much more. **It's easy!** Just go to our website **TexasChildrensHealthPlan.org** and click the *Member Login* link at the top of the page to get started.



NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 1167
HOUSTON, TX

**Texas Children's
Health Plan**



PO Box 301011, NB 8360
Houston, Texas 77230



Freeze out the flu this winter

The holiday hustle and bustle is coming. It will soon be time to shop for Christmas presents. However, no one is shopping for colds or the flu this year! Getting sick this winter is not on anyone's to-do list, so here are a few tips to keep them away.

Get a flu shot. Make sure everyone in your family gets the flu shot. The flu shot is recommended for everyone ages 6 months or older. Young children, anyone with asthma, older adults, and pregnant women have the hardest time fighting off the flu.

Spread the love, not the germs. Wash your hands often with warm, soapy water or a hand sanitizer. Keep hands away from your nose, eyes, and mouth. Sneeze into a tissue or your elbow. Avoid sharing food or drinks with others. Use a disinfectant to clean phones, keyboards, doorknobs, toys, tables, and counters at home, at work or in the classroom.

Travel smart. Traveling this holiday season puts you around a lot of people and their germs. Avoid using shared items on planes unless they are pre-packaged. Bring anti-bacterial wipes with you to clean your hands, armrests, tray tables and other shared spaces.

Be good to your body. Exercise, eat healthy foods and get enough sleep. Even with the colder weather, your family can stay active indoors or outdoors. Regular exercise helps you manage stress, reduce anxiety and helps you sleep better.

Stay home when you are sick. Common flu symptoms are a fever of 100 degrees F or higher, cough or sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, chills, feeling overly tired, vomiting, and diarrhea. Call your primary care physician if you think you or your child may have the flu. Take time to rest, drink plenty of fluids, and avoid spreading the illness to others.

Jenny M Rowlands, MPH CHES, Health Educator

Good health is a gift. Get your flu shot.

Flu season is here. And December, January, and February are usually the worst months for the flu. You can help stop the spread of flu by getting the flu shot. Everyone 6 months of age and older should get the vaccine. And it's especially important for women who are pregnant to get the flu vaccine because you are at a higher risk for problems from the flu. Don't wait. Protect yourself and your family. You can get the flu shot at your doctor's office or a drug store.

To find a drug store near you go to:
TexasChildrensHealthPlan.org or call
1-866-959-6555 (CHIP) or
1-866-959-2555 (STAR).

Did you know that between 5 and 20 percent of people in the U.S. get the flu every year? And more than 200,000 people go to the hospital for flu-like symptoms every year.

Deal with diabetes during the holidays

The holidays can be a tough time for families dealing with diabetes. With a little planning, your family will be ready to enjoy the holiday season.

Know your family's schedule so you can plan ahead. Are you going out of town? Having guests stay with you? Do your plans include a lot of parties and food-oriented events? Getting a handle on what your schedule will look like will help you deal with planning each meal.

Once you know what your day will include, take a look at your menu. You may need to fine-tune it to be acceptable for a diabetic. There are plenty of ways to lower fat, sugar, and carbohydrate counts in your favorite foods, but still keep the great taste. For instance, you can use fat-free sour cream instead of regular. Or, steam green beans instead of drowning them in butter. Talk to your doctor about ways to make healthy changes to the food you eat.

Try these tips for managing your diabetes during the holidays:

- Decide ahead of time what and how much you will eat.
- Share 1 dessert with a family member, limit the serving size, and scrape off high-fat whipped topping.
- Offer to bring a favorite low-sugar dessert to a party.
- Don't take a holiday from your family's exercise routine. Continue workouts and add in extra activities, such as power walking while shopping or parking further out and walking to the mall.

Source: www.diabetes.org

What to do when you're sick and blue!

Cold and flu season is here. Many kids will get sick and need to be home from school. They may be stuck in the house for many days. Here are some things to keep them entertained when they are feeling crummy and bored.

They will feel the worst the first two days, so they will need lots of love and rest. You can spend these days watching their favorite movies and reading them stories. They won't feel like doing much else and will sleep a lot.

Soon they will begin to feel better but will still need a few more days at home while they fully recover. This is when they start to get bored. Here are some activities to help these days pass pleasantly.

- Board games
- Coloring
- Looking at old family pictures
- Building a fort
- Make sock puppets using old socks, fabric, buttons, glue, and scissors. Once you make your characters, you and your child can act out a puppet play. You could even perform the play later that day when the rest of the family comes home.

Christopher M. Smith, LMSW, LMFT, CCM



Surviving **the holidays** with ADHD

Children and adolescents with ADHD respond well to structure and routine. Special times like vacations or holidays can upset the routine and bring a level of excitement and stress that can send your child and you over the top. Here are some tips to help you cope and enjoy the season:

- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest. Try to keep his normal sleep, eating, and medicine schedule.
- Let your child know beforehand what is going to happen.
- Watch for disruptive behaviors. If your child gets too excited, distract him with a break, snack, different activity, or a timeout.
- Assign your child special jobs to give him positive ways to contribute. He can decorate the holiday table, make special placemats for guests, or help make a holiday dish.
- Find ways to burn off excess energy. On a car trip, stop for a hike. Or, go bike riding after a holiday meal.
- Suggest that relatives read about ADHD before they spend time with your child. This will help them understand the disorder.

Source: http://www.adhdinfo.com/info/parents/living/par_adhd_and_family_life.jsp



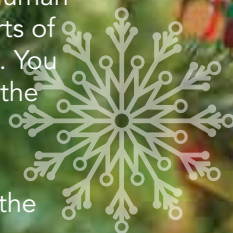
Treat your child's ADHD

If your child has ADHD and has been getting treatment, be on the lookout for a welcome packet from Texas Children's Health Plan ADD/ADHD Program.

This packet has helpful information about ADHD. It also has a doctor's visit and medication log. This will help you keep track of doctor and therapy visits.

Texas Children's Health Plan and the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) are checking key parts of care for children who are given ADHD medication. You may get follow-up calls to help remind you about the visit.

- Your child should go to a follow-up visit by the prescribing doctor during the first 30 days from the first date the medicine was given.
- Your child should also go to 2 follow-up visits within the next 9 months from a prescribing doctor.



Can the weather **affect your asthma?**

Weather can bring on asthma symptoms. Some people find their asthma gets worse at certain times of the year. Here's what you need to know about the weather and your asthma:

- **Cold, dry air is a common asthma trigger.** That's especially true for people who play winter sports and have exercise-induced asthma.
- **Hot, humid air also can be a problem.** In some places, heat and sunlight combine with pollutants to create ground-level ozone. This can be a strong asthma trigger.
- **Wet or windy weather can cause problems, too.** Wet weather encourages the growth of mold, and wind can blow mold and pollen through the air.

If you think weather may be triggering your asthma, work with your doctor to track your symptoms in a diary. Ask about allergy testing if you think your asthma is triggered by pollen or mold.

If air quality or weather affects you, here are some things you can try:

- Watch the weather forecast for information on pollen counts.
- Limit your outdoor activity on days when your triggers are strongest.
- Avoid mowing the lawn and raking leaves.
- Keep your quick-relief medicine with you at all times.

Source: KidsHealth.org

Does your child have a **Written Asthma Action Plan?**

An Asthma Action Plan is a written guide to help keep your child well and deal with asthma problems. You make this plan with your child's doctor. The plan may change as your child's asthma needs change. You should have a copy at home and at school and with other caregivers.

An Asthma Action Plan includes:

- A daily care plan to help keep your child well and meet goals for asthma control.
- A rescue plan to help your child deal quickly with increasing symptoms.
- A guide for asthma emergencies to help you know when to call the doctor and when you need emergency help.

Call us at 832-828-1430 if you need an Asthma Action Plan.



7- and 30-day mental health follow-up

Has your child been in short-term (acute) psychiatric care? If so, you may have been informed that your child must have a 7- and 30-day follow-up visit with a mental health professional.

Take your child to an in-network provider within 7 days of discharge. And again within 30 days of discharge. We urge you to see a therapist for the 7-day follow-up and a psychiatrist for the 30-day follow-up. This makes sure your child is seen post discharge when they may be at the most risk for relapse. If needed, your child can work through any issues in therapy on an outpatient basis. And he or she can see the psychiatrist to check his or her medications.

Baked Cinnamon Stuffed Apples

Fruit dishes like these Baked Cinnamon Stuffed Apples can make a yummy, healthy dessert. The smell of these apples baking in the oven will have your mouth watering.

Ingredients:

- 4 large McIntosh or Golden Delicious Apples, cored
- ½ lemon, juiced
- ¼ cup + 2 tablespoons Splenda® Brown Sugar Blend
- ¼ cup oatmeal
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons trans-fat free margarine
- ¼ cup pecans, finely chopped

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Drizzle lemon juice over apples.
3. In a small bowl, mix together remaining ingredients. Stuff each apple with approximately ¼ cup oat mixture.
4. Place apples in an oven safe baking dish and bake for 25-30 minutes.

Be active. Keep fit! Stay healthy.



Learn how to live a healthier life!

Members from 10 to 18 years old can sign up for our **Keep Fit Club** and learn fun, easy ways to stay active and make smart food choices. And it's no cost to you!

Keep Fit offers:

- Healthy cooking demos and easy recipes.
- Fun exercises you can do at home.
- Special activities.

When:

Saturdays:
January 16 (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.)
January 30 (10 a.m. to 12 p.m.)
February 13 (10 a.m. to 12 p.m.)
February 27 (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.)

Location:

Aldine-Greenspoint YMCA
Wussow Park
500 Greens Rd.
Houston, TX 77060

Sign up: TexasChildrensHealthPlan.org/KeepFit or call 832-828-1430