Winter Safety for Kids

We often hear about summer safety tips—ways to protect us from the sun and the heat. But, winter is also a time when safety reminders are important. Your kids should continue to get physical activity during the winter. Here are a few tips to keep them safe as they venture in the great outdoors:

**Did you know that kids can still get sunburned in the winter?** Remember to use sunscreen on exposed parts of their skin during outdoor play.

**Dress infants and children warmly for outdoor activities.** Several thin layers will keep them dry and warm. Don’t forget warm boots, gloves and a hat. Kids who aren’t dressed warmly enough can develop a lower than normal body temperature. This is known as hypothermia.

**Frostbite happens when the skin becomes frozen.** Check on your kid while he or she is playing to make sure frostbite hasn’t developed. It is especially common on fingers, toes, ears and the nose.

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Sledding can be great fun, but also has many dangers. Dangers include head and neck injuries. Always supervise your kids while they are sledding. Do not allow your kids to slide down headfirst. Consider having your kids wear a bicycle helmet. Avoid sledding in crowds as collisions with other sledders are likely to occur.

Set reasonable time limits on outdoor play. This will prevent low body temperature and frostbite. Have your kids come inside to warm up before they head back out to play.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

Why Is Dental Care So Important?

Early checkups help avoid cavities. Cavities can lead to pain, trouble focusing and other medical issues. Children with healthy teeth can chew food easily, speak clearly and smile with confidence.

Regular dental visits can do more than keep your smile attractive. Your teeth can tell dentists a lot about your overall health. Dentists can tell if you may be developing a disease like diabetes.

Research shows that gum disease may lead to other health problems. This can include stroke and heart disease. Also, women with gum disease are more likely to have pre-term, low birth-weight babies.

It is important that dental care start at a young age. The first dental visit is recommended at the time of the first tooth and no later than 12 months of age. The most common interval to see your dentist is every six months; however, some people may need more or fewer checkups, based upon past medical and x-ray findings.

To protect your oral health, practice good oral hygiene every day:

• Brush your teeth at least twice a day.
• Floss daily.
• Eat a healthy diet.
• Limit between-meal snacks.
• Replace your toothbrush every three to four months or sooner if bristles are frayed.
• Schedule regular dental checkups.

Health behaviors that can lead to poor oral health include:

• Tobacco use.
• Too much alcohol use.
• Poor food choices.

Also, contact your dentist as soon as an oral health problem arises. Remember, taking care of your oral health is an investment in your overall health.

Sources:

HealthyPeople.gov – Healthy People 2020 Topics – Oral Health
National Institutes of Health – National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research
Academy of General Dentistry – American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, Clinical Practice Guidelines

Protect Your Child from Lead Poisoning – Get Your Child Tested by Age Two

Lead is a very strong poison. It can affect many different parts of the body. It usually builds up slowly over time. Small amounts of lead can cause serious health problems.

Lead poisoning can severely affect mental and physical development. At very high levels, lead poisoning can cause death.

Lead is much more harmful to children than adults. It can affect their developing nerves and brains. Children under the age of six are more vulnerable to lead poisoning. Unborn children are the most vulnerable. Pregnant women must avoid lead exposure.

Where does lead poisoning come from? Lead is everywhere. It is in dirt, dust, new toys and old house paint. Unfortunately, you can’t see, taste or smell lead. When a person swallows an object made with lead or covered with lead dust or breathes in lead dust, some of the poison can stay in the body.

Talk to your doctor about lead testing. EVERY MDwise child should be tested for lead at 12 months and by 24 months (or two years old). If a child has never had the test, they should be tested at age three and/or by age six. If you are pregnant, you should also talk to your doctor to see if you have been exposed to lead.

Get your FREE gift card!

You don’t have to sign up for MDwiseREWARDS to earn points. You are automatically enrolled. Earn points for a variety of activities, like going to your doctor appointments. Then shop for gift cards with your points. Go to MDwise.org/rewards to learn more.
Important Information in Your Member Handbook

There is important information in your Hoosier Healthwise and HIP member handbook. The most up-to-date version can be found at MDwise.org. It includes:

Your Rights and Responsibilities
MDwise provides care through a partnership that includes your doctor, MDwise, other health care staff and you—our member. We do not discriminate based on religion, race, nationality, origin, color, ancestry, handicap, sex, sexual preference or age.

Hoosier Healthwise and HIP Member Benefits and Services
The complete list of benefits and services, and what is not covered, is in your member handbook and can be found at MDwise.org. If you want to know costs before you get medical services please visit MDwise.org. We have posted a list of common medical services and their costs. You can also call MDwise customer service and we will research it for you. We will call you back to let you know the cost. Some of the benefits and services include:

• Preventive care.
• Special needs.
• Behavioral and mental health care.
• Help finding doctors, hospitals and information about them.
• Interpretation services if you need information in another language.
• Information about pharmacy services.
• Information about transportation.
• Information on self-referral services.
• Help knowing what to do if you get sick or have an emergency (including after hours).
• Help knowing what charges or copays you have to pay (if any).
• Information about services outside of MDwise.
• Help if you have a complaint (grievance).
• Help if you do not agree with the decision to solve your complaint (appeal).

Information on New Health Technology
MDwise looks at new medical and behavioral health procedures. We also look at new drugs and equipment. To help us do this we use:

• Experts.
• Research.
• Government decisions.

This helps us to decide if they are safe and should be provided for our members. Call MDwise customer service at 1-800-356-1204 or 317-630-2831 in the Indianapolis area if you have any questions about your benefits. You can also ask for a printed copy of the member handbook.

Getting Help with a Problem

The quality of service you get from MDwise is important to us.

If you have a concern or are not satisfied, call MDwise customer service. You must do this within 60 days of when the problem occurred.

If you are unhappy with a service you receive, a MDwise customer service representative will file a grievance. He or she will try to solve your concerns right away, you can call MDwise customer service at 1-800-356-1204 or 317-630-2831 in the Indianapolis area.

Filing an Appeal

If you do not agree with a MDwise decision about your health services, you have the right to ask for further review. This includes if MDwise has decided that a request for services cannot be approved. You will receive written notification of the decision. This notice will include your right to appeal. It will include the steps to start an appeal. You can ask someone else, such as your doctor, to file an appeal on your behalf.

For more information on filing a grievance or an appeal, please visit MDwise.org/help.

Prior Authorization Decisions

MDwise medical management makes prior authorization decisions based on appropriateness of care and coverage rules. MDwise medical management staff and our delegates who perform prior authorization do not receive incentives or rewards, financial or otherwise, for making denial decisions and are not rewarded for making UM decisions that decrease utilization of services by MDwise members.
Manage Your Medicines

Taking medicine like the doctor tells you is very important! It helps keep your, or your child’s conditions controlled. Medicines can prevent flare-ups and reduce symptoms. This can keep you from having to go to the emergency room or be admitted to the hospital.

Your doctor wants to know what you think. If your doctor starts a new medicine or stops a medicine you or your child have been taking, talk with your doctor about what you think is best.

Here are some tips to manage your medicines. Follow these same tips for your child’s medicines.

1. Make a list of current medicines. Keep this list with you all the time.
2. Be sure to include all prescription and over-the-counter medicines. Be sure to include any vitamins or supplements you take. This includes herbal supplements.
3. Be sure to show the list to the doctor at each appointment. Update the list if the doctor changes your medicines.
4. Make sure to always plan ahead to get refills. Don’t wait and run out of any of your medicines.
5. Set up reminders so you don’t forget to take your medicines. You may want to set up your medicines in a pill organizer every week. This helps keep track of the medicines you need to take every day.
6. If you have trouble organizing your medicines, talk to your pharmacy. They are glad to help you.
7. It helps to use one pharmacy for all your medicines. That way, the pharmacist will know about ALL the medicines you take. He or she can check for any negative interactions between your medicines.

Talk with your doctor or pharmacist. Your doctor and pharmacist will help you understand all the medicines you, or your child take. They will answer your questions like:

1. What are they for?
2. What are the reasons I should take them?
3. What are the reasons I should stop taking them?
4. How should I take them?
5. What time of day should I take them?
6. How often should I take them?
7. Will I need to continue taking them once I feel better?
8. What are the side effects of the medicine?

Always ask! You need to know. You and your children will stay healthier and safer when you get all your questions answered.

Check out MDwise.org

The MDwise website has many helpful member resources. You can:

- View the most recent member handbook.
- Find a doctor or pharmacy in your area.
- Go to MDwise.org/INcontrol to get helpful information about certain health conditions.
- Learn more about our other special programs to help your family stay healthy.
- Review the MDwise privacy policy.
- Review member rights and responsibilities.
- View and print copies of previous or current newsletters.
- View the MDwise community events calendar.

You might not have a computer at home. Your public library has computers with access to the Internet for free. Please visit us at MDwise.org. Information for members is in both English and Spanish.

HIP Preventive Dental and Vision Services

Dental and vision exams are now included as preventive care services for HIP members. These exams count as a preventive service for members who have dental and vision coverage as part of their plan. See below for the plans that include dental and vision coverage.

HIP plans that include dental coverage:
- HIP Plus.
- HIP Basic (members 19-20 years old).
- HPE (adult presumptive eligibility) members 19-20 years old.
- HIP State Plan Plus.
- HIP State Plan Basic.
- All HIP Pregnancy plans.

HIP plans that include vision coverage:
- HIP Plus.
- HIP Basic (members 19-20 years old).
- HPE (adult presumptive eligibility) members 19-20 years old.
- HIP State Plan Plus.
- HIP State Plan Basic.
- All HIP Pregnancy plans.

Remember, all preventive care you get is covered by MDwise. For more information visit MDwise.org/HIPpreventive.
Managing Your Stress

The best way to manage stress is to prevent it. Get enough sleep. Eat a proper diet. Avoid too much caffeine and alcohol. Take time out to relax every day. These things may help reduce your stress level.

You can’t avoid all stress in your life. And everyone responds differently to stress. Stress not only affects our mental health but can cause physical illness too. Learning some ways to cope can help you get through stressful times.

Try these tips from the Anxiety and Depression Association of America to manage anxiety and stress:

• Take a time-out. Practice yoga, listen to music, meditate, get a massage or learn relaxation techniques. Stepping back from the problem helps clear your head.
• Eat well-balanced meals. Do not skip any meals. Keep healthful, energy-boosting snacks on hand.
• Limit alcohol and caffeine. These can make anxiety worse and trigger panic attacks.
• Get enough sleep. When stressed, your body needs more sleep and rest.
• Exercise daily. This will help you feel good and maintain your health.
• Take deep breaths. Inhale and exhale slowly.
• Count to 10 slowly and repeat. Count to 20 if you need to.
• Do your best. Don’t aim for perfection—it’s not possible. Be proud of what you accomplish.
• Accept that you cannot control everything. Put your stress in perspective: Is it really as bad as you think?
• Welcome humor. A good laugh goes a long way.
• Maintain a positive attitude. Make an effort to trade negative thoughts for positive ones.
• Get involved. Volunteer or find another way to be active in your community. This creates a support network. It also gives you a break from everyday stress.
• Learn what triggers your anxiety. Is it work, family or school? Or is it something else you can identify? Write in a journal when you’re feeling stressed or anxious and look for a pattern.
• Talk to someone. Tell friends and family you’re feeling overwhelmed. Let them know how they can help you. Talk to a pastor or priest. You may want to see a physician or therapist for professional help.
• Learn more about how to manage stress. Go to MDwise.org/Stress.
What is COPD?

COPD stands for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. This is a group of diseases that can block the flow of air in your lungs and can make it hard for you to breathe. COPD can include:

- Emphysema.
- Chronic bronchitis.
- Lung growth and development.
- Genetic factors.
- Air pollution.

The main cause of COPD is tobacco use. Other causes can include air pollutants, genetics and asthma. Signs of COPD include:

- Coughing.
- Shortness of breath while doing normal activities.
- Producing a lot of mucus.
- Feeling like you can’t breathe or take a deep breath.
- Wheezing.

If you show signs of COPD, or are at risk, you should see your doctor. This is especially important if you are over age 45 and smoke or have smoked in the past. Your doctor will have you take a simple test for COPD and do a health exam. If you are diagnosed with COPD, your doctor will help you come up with a treatment plan.

There are many ways to protect yourself from getting COPD if you are at risk:

- If you smoke, stop smoking.
- Secondhand smoke can also cause COPD, so keep your home smoke free.

Earn MDwiseREWARDS Points for being SMOKE-free

If you smoke or use tobacco you can earn MDwiseREWARDS points for trying to quit. To earn points, you must complete a cessation program. Programs include:

- Indiana’s Tobacco Quitline.
- Baby and Me Tobacco Free.
- A program through your hospital or clinic.

Ask your doctor about the programs he or she recommends. Once completed, ask for a certificate or letter of completion. Then send a copy to MDwise by mail, fax or email to get your points.

Mail to:
MDwiseREWARDS
P.O. Box 441423
Indianapolis, IN 46244

Fax (toll-free) to: 1-844-759-8551
Email to: rewards@mdwise.org

You can get tips for quitting at MDwise.org/wellness/smokefree. For further advice and support, call Indiana’s Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669). It’s available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also go to quitnowindiana.com.

Questions? Comments? Complaints?

If you need help with anything about MDwise or your doctor, we can help. Please call MDwise customer service at 1-800-356-1204 or 317-630-2831 in the Indianapolis area.

MDwise customer service offers language services. We might use an interpreter.