

Stay cool in winter

STAR HEALTH DESK

In the winter season, some health problems like asthma, sore throat and cold sores are triggered or worsened usually. Some people feel shaky with the onset of winter season. But here you can find how to help you to deal with these common cold weather ailments.

Colds: You can help prevent colds by washing your hands regularly. This destroys germs that you may have picked up from touching surfaces used by other people, such as light switches and door handles.

It is also important to keep the house and any household items such as cups, glasses and towels clean, especially if someone in your house is ill.

If you get a cold, use disposable tissues instead of cloth handkerchiefs to avoid constantly re-infecting your own hands.

Sore throat: Sore throats are common in winter and are almost always caused by viral infections.

One quick and easy remedy for a sore throat is to gargle with warm salty water. It will not heal the infection, but it has anti-inflammatory properties and can have a soothing effect. Dissolve one teaspoon of salt in a glass of part-cooled boiled water.

Asthma: Cold air is a major trigger of asthma symptoms such as wheezing and shortness of breath. People with asthma should be especially careful in winter.

Stay indoors on very cold,

windy days. If you do go out, wear a scarf over your nose and mouth. Be extra vigilant about taking your regular medications, and keep rescue inhalers close by and in a warm place.

Norovirus: Also known as the winter vomiting bug, norovirus is an extremely infectious stomach bug. It can strike all year round, but is more common in winter and in places such as hotels and schools. The illness is unpleasant, but it is usually over within a couple of days.

When people are ill with vomiting and diarrhoea, it is important to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Young children and the elderly are especially at risk. By drinking oral rehydration fluids, you can reduce the risk of dehydration.

Painful joints: Many people with arthritis say their joints become more painful in winter, though it is not clear why this is the case. Only joint symptoms such as pain and stiffness are affected by the weather. There is no evidence that changes in the weather cause joint damage.

Many people get a little depressed during the winter months, and this can make them perceive pain more acutely. Everything feels worse, including medical conditions. Daily exercise can boost a person's mental and physical state. Swimming is ideal as it is easy on the joints.

Cold sores: Most of us recognise that cold sores are a



sign that we are run down or under stress.

Every day, do things that make you feel less stressed, such as having a hot bath, going for a walk in the park, or watching one of your favourite films.

Heart attacks: Heart attacks are more common in winter. This may be because cold snaps increase blood pressure and put more strain on the heart. Your heart also has to work harder to maintain body heat when it is cold.

Stay warm in your home. Use a hot water bottle or electric blanket to keep warm in bed. Wrap up warm when you go out and wear a hat, scarf and gloves.

Cold hands: Raynaud's phenomenon is a common condition that makes your fingers and toes change colour and

become very painful in cold weather. Fingers can go white, then blue, then red, and throb and tingle. It is a sign of poor circulation in the small blood vessels of the hands and feet. In severe cases, medication can help, but most people live with their symptoms.

Don't smoke or drink caffeine (they can both worsen symptoms) and always wear warm gloves, socks and shoes when going out in cold weather.

Dry skin: Dry skin is a common condition and is often worse during the winter, when environmental humidity is low.

Moisturising is essential during winter. Contrary to popular belief, moisturising lotions and creams are not absorbed by the skin. Instead, they act as a sealant

to stop the skin's natural moisture evaporating away.

The best time to apply moisturiser is after a bath or shower while your skin is still moist, and again at bedtime.

Have warm, rather than hot, showers. Water that is too hot makes skin feel more dry and itchy. Hot water will also make your hair look dull and dry.

Flu: Flu is a major killer of vulnerable people. People aged 65 and over and people with long-term health conditions, including diabetes and kidney disease, are particularly at risk.

The best way to prevent getting flu is to have the flu jab (or flu nasal spray for children aged 2 to 18). The flu vaccine gives good protection against flu and lasts for one year.

TIPS



15 tips to store medicine

1. Most medications should be stored in a dry place away from heat and humidity. Some medications also have special instructions for storage. Check for special instructions on your prescription label.
2. If there is cotton in the pill bottle when you first open it, remove the cotton and throw it away because the cotton can absorb moisture and affect the medicine that is inside.
3. Never take medicine in the dark because good lighting near where you store your medicines will help you make sure you are taking the right medicine.
4. Keep the medicine in the bottle it came in. The amber color protects the medicine from light. You will also have the information right there about what the medicine is and how often to take it.
5. If your medication needs to be protected from light, it should be stored in a container that filters out light, such as a clean film canister.
6. If your medication needs to be refrigerated, and you do not have a fridge available (for example, if you are working outside or on the road all day), try using a cooler with an ice pack.
7. Keep track of the expiry dates of the medications. The ideal way to do this is to keep the medications in their original prescription vial. But, you can also put this information on a sticker on the container that you are using for the medication.
8. Don't store multiple medications in the same vial, as this makes it hard to keep track of which medications are which, which doses have been taken, and what the expiry dates are.
9. Never mix different medicine in the same bottle. You might end up taking the wrong one by mistake. It is also possible that some of one medicine could rub off on another and affect how well it works.
10. Mixing prescription drugs with an undesirable substance, such as used coffee grounds or kitty litter, and putting them in impermeable, non-descript containers, such as empty cans or sealable bags; will further ensure the drugs are not diverted.
11. If there are children around, you might want to find an area where you can lock up your medicines. A cabinet or a drawer with a lock on it would work.
12. Keep your medicines separate from those of your spouse or other family members (for instance, on a different shelf or at least on a separate side of a shelf). This will make it less likely that you take the wrong ones by mistake.
13. Take unused, unneeded, or expired prescription drugs out of their original containers and throw them in the trash.
14. Keep the label of medication and read the medicine label properly. You can also write the phone number of the pharmacy on the label so you can call when it is time for a refill.
15. The final step is to take a look at all the medicine you have. You should try to do this type of inventory every six months, by this ways; you can help prevent an accidental injury, as well as do your part to stop the possible abuse of prescription medicine.

The write up is compiled by Muhammad Arifur Rahman, Asst. Professor of Dpt. of Pharmacy, Daffodil International University.

HEALTH bulletin

Foreign body ingestion by children

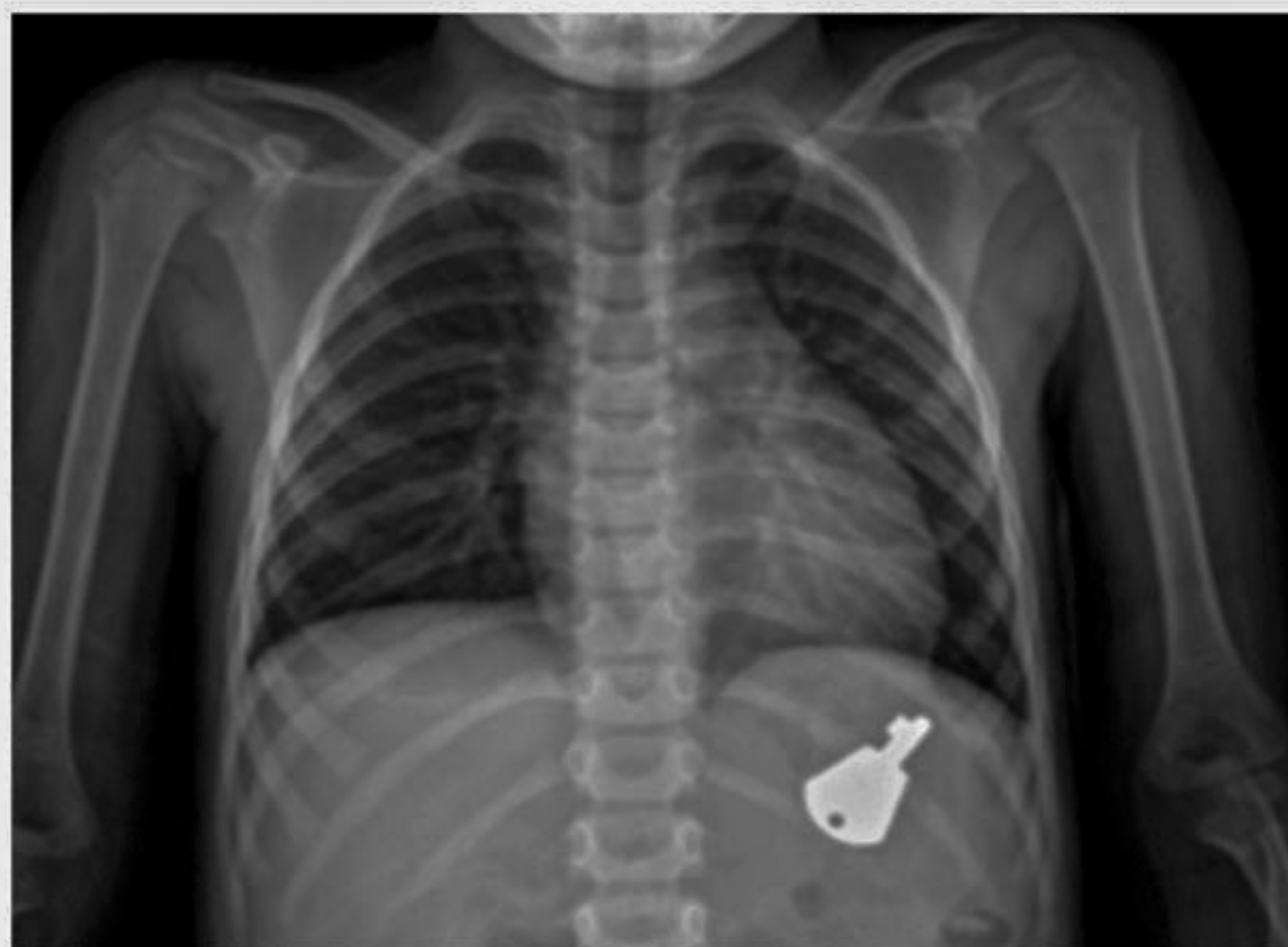
PROF M KARIM KHAN

Today let me share with you a true story. Couple of weeks ago, one very anxious couple came to me with their three years old male child Sadik (not a real name). Presenting complain was — Sadik ingested a small key few hours back. Parents were too nervous but Sadik was found playful. A plain X ray of abdomen in erect posture revealed that there was a radio opaque key like shadow somewhere in the intestine.

I tried to make the parents comfort by assuring them not to worry as the key would come out with stool. No medication was given; I just asked them to check the stool to see whether the foreign body came out with stool or not. Anyway on day three they all came with happy mood along with that ingested key.

Ingestion of foreign body by children is not uncommon. Common foreign bodies are being ingested by children in our country are coins, safety pins, buttons, battery of toys or remote control devices, some parts of toys etc.

Children are very curious by nature; they try to explore things by putting them in mouth. Fortunately in most of the cases ingestion of foreign bodies makes no serious problem, but if they are being stuck



in the larynx (commonly called the voice box, an organ in the neck involved in breathing, sound production, and protecting the trachea against food aspiration) may create emergency situation as respiratory distress is very obvious.

Even after ingestion of any foreign body please don't be panic, try to be calm and take the child to nearby emergency department of hospital and follow the instruction of the emergency doctor.

Prevention of ingestion of foreign body is very important. To do that try to keep an eye while they are

playing with plastic toys like cars, as parts of these toys can be separated easily.

Choosing of the toys should be age appropriate. Buttons, safety pins, batteries etc. are to be kept out of reach of children. In spite of all precautions accidental ingestion of foreign bodies may occur. So instead of being nervous, behave logically. Take care of your kids.

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Vitamin D might help kids with eczema

Daily vitamin D supplements might help children with eczema that gets worse in the winter, a new study published in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology suggests.

Eczema is a chronic inflammatory skin disorder, marked early by redness, itching and later by scaling and often pigmentation. Researchers found that the children who received the vitamin D supplements had an average 29 percent improvement in their symptoms.

Worry less, be happier - just by going to bed earlier

People who sleep for shorter periods of time and go to bed very late at night are often overwhelmed with more negative thoughts than those who keep more regular sleeping hours. The findings appear in Springer's journal Cognitive Therapy and Research.



Knowing for better living

Walking at least **2 hours a week** reduces the incidence of premature death from cardiovascular disease by about **50%**

Take low fat diet

Be physically active

Avoid smoking

Eat vegetables and fresh fruits

Maintain healthy weight

Consult your Doctor



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