



WINTER

**PRIORITY PEDIATRICS**

NOV. 2025

WELCOME TO OUR

# *Winter Newsletter*

Dear Families,

It's the most wonderful time of the year, and this season brings not only colder weather but also a time for reflection, gratitude, and connection with loved ones. In this edition we will cover topics about winter wellness and exciting updates about our practice.

Thank you for trusting us with your child's health. Warm wishes for a wonderful winter season!

With love, Priority Pediatrics

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# 'tis the season TO BE SNEEZING

## HOW DO I COMBAT MY CHILD'S ALLERGIES?



Seasonal Allergies, often referred to as "hay fever" or allergic rhinitis, are allergic reactions that occur at specific times of the year when certain allergens are present in the environment.

### **Symptoms of Seasonal Allergies include:**

- sneezing
- runny nose
- itchy eyes, nose or throat
- coughing
- fatigue
- headaches

Understanding seasonal allergies can help manage symptoms effectively and enjoy outdoor activities more comfortably during specific allergy seasons

### **Typical management for seasonal allergies include:**

- avoid the trigger
- over-the-counter antihistamines, decongestants or nasal sprays
- allergy testing with an allergy specialist to explore options such as immunotherapy for long-term relief

### **How can I manage my kid's allergies naturally?**

#### Reduce allergen exposure

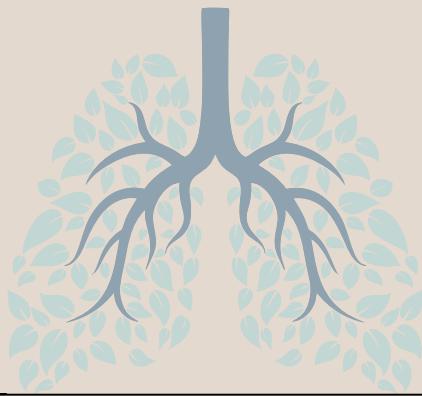
- Keep indoor air clean: Keep windows and doors shut during high pollen seasons and use air conditioning with the fan on a low setting to filter the air. Consider using an air purifier with a HEPA filter, especially in your child's bedroom.
- Clean your home regularly: Dust and vacuum frequently. Use a damp cloth to wipe down surfaces to trap dust instead of scattering it.
- Wash and change after outdoor play: Have your child bathe or shower and change clothes after spending time outside to wash pollen off their skin and hair. Wipe down pets after they come inside, as they can track pollen indoors.

#### Soothe symptoms naturally

- Saline nasal rinses: Use an over-the-counter saline nasal spray or rinse to effectively flush allergens and mucus out of the nasal passages.
- Cold or warm compresses: Place a warm or cold compress on your child's face to help relieve pressure and soothe red, itchy eyes.
- Adjust diet and consider supplements: Increase vitamin C: Offer foods rich in vitamin C like oranges, strawberries, and broccoli, which can act as natural antihistamines.
- Incorporate omega-3s: Ensure your child eats fish a few times a week, as omega-3 fatty acids can help reduce inflammation.

# MANAGING ASTHMA: TIPS FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Winter time often shows and rise in asthma flares due to the increase in upper respiratory infections, temperature changes and increased indoor activity with exposure to potential triggers such as dust, pet dander, and mold.



## UNDERSTANDING ASHTMA TRIGGERS

What are the most common triggers for childhood asthma and wheezing?

1. Allergens (pollen, mold, dust mites, pet dander etc.)
2. Respiratory infections (cold and flu)
3. Environmental factors (smoke, pollution, strong odors)
4. Physical activity (exercise-induced asthma)

## CREATE AN ASTHMA ACTION PLAN

It's so important that you, as your child's caregiver, understand what to do if your child has incidence of wheezing or asthma exacerbation.

Work with your provider to develop a personalized asthma action plan. This plan should outline:

- Daily management strategies (medication, inhaler etc.)
- Signs of worsening asthma and what the next steps are
- Emergency procedures

## MANAGING ASTHMA

Medications:

- Controller medications:
  - These are taken daily to prevent symptoms. (example, allergy medications, daily inhaler etc.)
- Rescue medications:
  - These are used for quick relief during asthma attacks (example: albuterol inhaler)

Teach your child:

- teach your child the signs of needing their rescue inhalers and how to use it or their spacer etc.
- Empower them to ask for help when they need it at home or at school

Maintain a Clean Environment:

- Reduce allergens by keeping windows closed during high pollen season
- Using an air purifier or HEPA filter in home heating and cooling systems

See your provider regularly

- schedule regular check ups with your provider to assess asthma control and make necessary adjustments to medications or management strategies

If you have any questions or need assistance regarding your child's asthma, please reach out to our office. Your child's health is our priority!

# Battling the Winter time Blues

Seasonal Depression, also known and Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), is a type of depression that occurs at a specific time of year, usually fall or winter when the daylight hours are shorter.

Here are some strategies to avoid or manage seasonal depression for your kids:

## Get Outside:

Maximize daylight by trying to spend time outside during daylight everyday. Even on cloudy days, natural light can influence your mood. Go for walks or engage in outdoor activities, especially in the morning.



## Regular Exercise:

Physical activity is a powerful antidote for sadness and depression. Aim for at least 30 minute of moderate exercise everyday for your child. Even indoors, you can encourage your child to practice yoga, dancing or walking every day.

## Establish a Routine:

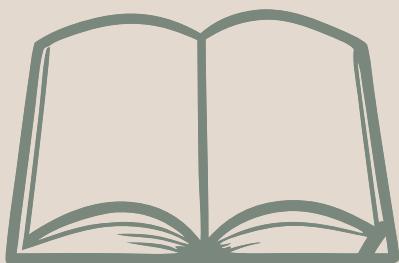
Keeping a consistent routine can provide structure and help reduce feelings of unpredictability. Set regular wake-up and sleep times, meal schedules and activity plans. Minimizing interruptions to sleep routine and screen time is essential to manage mood.

## Healthy Diet:

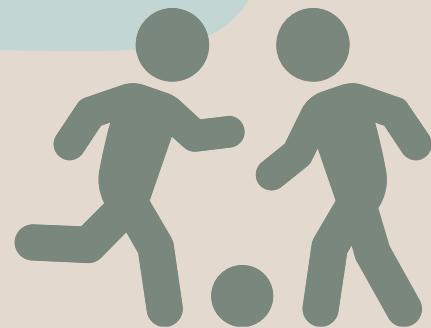
Eating a well balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein directly affects mood. Be sure to add Vitamin D into your routine as well.

# HOW DO I ENCOURAGE MY CHILD TO HAVE LESS **Screen time** & MORE **Play time**

**Encourage Unplugged Play:**  
Offer fun, engaging alternatives to screens, such as playing outside, reading, board games, or pursuing creative hobbies.



**Prioritize Physical Activity:**  
Encourage sports, walks, and other physical activities, as they are crucial for child development and mental health.



**Establish Screen-Free Times:**  
Designate specific times, such as during meals, family outings, or one hour before bedtime, when screens are off-limits.



**Use Timers:**  
Implement visual timers or use built-in screen time apps to help children track and adhere to their time limits.

**Create a Family Media Plan:**  
Involve your children in creating a family agreement for screen use, including what types of media are acceptable and when they are allowed.



**Designate Screen-Free Zones:**  
Make parts of your home, like bedrooms, phone-free zones to reduce temptation and improve focus.

# What does Dr. Desiree say?



## How much sugar is too much?

Everyone knows that sugar can cause cavities, but did you know that it's actually how often, and not how much a child consumes sugary foods or drink that has the greatest impact on cavity risk? Every time sugar is eaten, the bacteria in the mouth produce acids that weaken

tooth enamel for about 20-30 minutes. When kids snack or sip on sugary items throughout the day, their teeth stay in this acid attack cycle almost constantly, giving the enamel little time to recover. This

repeated exposure greatly increases the chance of developing cavities, even if the total amount of

sugar isn't very high. Keep your sweet drinks and treats limited to meal times only, and drink only water in between meals to help keep the acid levels in your saliva down. Cheddar cheese is also a great snack because it can reduce the acidity of your saliva and helps remineralize your enamel.

Keep flossing and brushing daily!

Dr. Desiree



## Desiree McMillen, DMD

As a trusted pediatric dentist in Ocala, FL, Dr. Desiree recognizes that every smile is unique and provides care that is tailored to your child's needs. Dr. Desiree is well-known for her kind, caring, and gentle personality. Having a family of her own, she loves being able to learn about other families and helping children achieve their best smiles.



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# EXCITING NEWS



We are THRILLED to announce the launch of our “Kangaroo Kits!”

This kit is designed to enhance your healthcare experience from the comfort of your home!

This kit includes:

## Bebird Earsight Plus Otoscope and Camera

This device allows for us to visualize the ear drum as well as nasal passage and throat right from your phone

## Home strep test strips

these test kits allow for home tests for strep throat

We are offering these home telemedicine devices to help empower our families without the need for frequent in-person visits.

In this kit you will also find informational pamphlets on how to use these devices.

Our aim is to help our families get the care they need while providing an alternative to in-person ear rechecks, and strep testing. This is not replacing in person visits, it is simply providing another option for you and your family.

These kits are being sent directly to your homes and will be available for telemedicine appointments starting in the New Year!

[Shop Now](#)

# We offer Lactation Counseling!

For Priority Pediatric members and Non-members



Lactation  
*in office*

**\$90.00**

for one hour session with  
our lactation coach

Lactation  
*at home*

**\$150.00**

for one hour session with  
our lactation coach



Priority Pediatric

WINTER

[WWW.PRIORITYPEDSOCALA.COM](http://WWW.PRIORITYPEDSOCALA.COM)

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# Almond Flour Chocolate Chip Cookies

Prep: 20 minutes mins Cook: 15minutes mins Total: 35 minutes mins  
Courtesy of: Clare Cary with “eat with CLARITY”

## Ingredients

- 7 tablespoons softened butter
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup light brown sugar or coconut sugar I prefer light brown
- 1 large egg
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cups blanched almond flour not almond meal
- 1 tablespoon corn starch
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon sea salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup semi sweet chocolate chips



## Instructions

Add the butter to a mixing bowl or bowl of a stand mixer. If it was previously in the fridge, just stick it in the microwave to soften for about 15 seconds.

Add in the sugar and beat with the butter until well combined, about 30 seconds with an electric mixer.

Beat in the egg and the vanilla until the egg is completely broken up.

Beat in all remaining ingredients aside from the chocolate chips, making sure to spoon and level the flour into the measuring cup, don't scoop right from the bag.

Beat until combined.

Fold in the chocolate chips with a wooden spoon until evenly incorporated.

Add the dough to the fridge for 20 minutes. This ensures the cookies don't spread flat while baking. The temperature of the butter is really important with cookies!

While you wait, preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

After 20 minutes, use a medium cookie scoop and scoop the dough into roughly 1 1/2 tbsp balls, but do not flatten.

Bake for 13-18 minutes, 15 is perfect in my oven if you want soft centers but a very slight crisp on the edge.

Remove from the oven and let cool as is for 15 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to finish cooling.

Make these cookies paleo by using coconut sugar in place of brown sugar and coconut oil for butter.

For best results, I recommend using corn starch, but tapioca or arrowroot will work if that's all you have.

Serving: 1 cookie / Calories: 184kcal / Carbohydrates: 16.8g / Protein: 4.6g / Fat: 11g / Fiber: 2g / Sugar: 11.4g