

**DIMOND
MEDICAL CLINIC**

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It's Slippery Out There!

Winter brings extra hazards for those who have to get out in bad weather.

Slippery driveways and sidewalks can be dangerous to our health. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the number one cause of accidental injury in all age groups is falling, and the National Safety Council reports that "more than 16,000 people—most of them elderly—die from falls" each year in the U.S. A few simple tips can help lower the risk of falling.

Safety & Sanding

Icy sidewalks, porches, and driveways should be sanded. Real sand is one of the very best materials to use, but in a pinch kitty litter can be used or even plain dirt left in those pots and planters from your summer plants.

Proper Shoes

Be sure to wear proper footwear as well. Leather or plastic soles are very slippery and should be avoided. Wear shoes or boots with good, non-slip tread or

purchase non-slip ice grips to wear over your shoes. These are available at most shoe or sporting goods stores. One of

our patients swears by Yak Traks, which are sold locally at Carrs and Wal-Mart, among other stores.

"I can walk my dogs again in the winter without worrying about falling," she said.

How to Walk

When walking on ice, even in proper shoes, take small steps and walk flat-footed. The flat-footed "zombie walk" helps you keep your balance and reduces the chance of slipping.

Safety Near Cars

Many falls occur when a person is getting into or out of a car and places all of his or her weight on one foot. To minimize the

chance of having that foot slip, use the car itself for stability. Hold on to the door or body of the car when getting in or out, and don't turn loose until you are sure you will not slip.

How to Fall

If you do fall, try not to use your arms to break your fall to avoid breaking an arm. If you start to fall, tuck your arms and head in close to the body and—as impossible as it sounds—relax and roll with the fall. This way your body will be more protected and your weight better distributed than if you fight the fall and land only on one point of the body.



When to See Us

Get a medical check if you have severe bruising after a fall or if your injury is unusually painful. Even broken bones are not always obvious when they first happen. Both Dimond and Wasilla Medical Clinics see many victims of falls every year, and we have x-rays on site.

Recommended Ice Thickness for Winter Activities

	☆ 2 inches: one person walking on ice		☆ 4 inches: ice fishing
	☆ 6 inches: snow machines or ATVs		☆ 12-15 inches: medium truck ☆ 8-12 inches: car or small truck

If you enjoy ice skating, ice fishing or just driving across the frozen lake as a shorter and quicker route to your lakeside home, you should always be aware of the thickness of the ice. Above is a table of recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.



Is It the Flu?

People say they “have the flu” for a variety of symptoms, but influenza, the “real” flu, is a serious illness, particularly for the very young, the elderly, and those who are in poor health. This year, with the shortage of the flu vaccine, there is a good chance you or someone you know may contract influenza.



What is the Flu? The flu is caused by a virus, spread either by contact or breathing in the airborne virus from a sneeze or cough.

Symptoms. Common flu symptoms sound a lot like cold symptoms, but unlike a cold, the flu usually starts

suddenly. The following is a list of typical symptoms:

- Fever
- Headache
- Extreme tiredness
- Cough
- Body aches
- Sore throat
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Diarrhea and vomiting

ALASKA MEDICAL CLINICS SERVICES

PRIMARY CARE SERVICES

- Pediatrics
- Adolescent Care
- Adult Medicine
- Women’s Health Care
- Minor Emergencies & Injuries
- Immunizations
- Physical Exams
- Preventive Care

OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE

- Pre-employment Physical Exams
- Health Screening Exams
- DOT Exams
- Drug Testing
- Worker’s Comp Evaluations

See our Web site (www.alaskamedicalclinics.com) for more information.

The Risks. The flu can lead to complications, some even life-threatening for those with other medical problems such as asthma, congestive heart failure, or diabetes. Pneumonia and dehydration are common complications that need medical attention. Ear and sinus infections can also develop from the flu.

Treatment. There is no treatment for the influenza virus. However, there are some medications that can reduce the severity of the flu if given soon enough.

These antiviral medications must be given within 48 hours after flu symptoms start, so it is important to see a doctor quickly if you suspect you or a family member has the flu. Otherwise, drink plenty of liquids, rest, and take fever-reducing medications if needed. However, never give aspirin to children or teenagers with flu-like symptoms. Do not go out in public if you have the flu as you will only spread it to others. Secondary infections caused by the flu can and should be treated by your health care professional.

Warning Signs. If someone with the flu-like symptoms develops any of these symptoms, seek medical care immediately:

For Children

- Rapid, difficult breathing
- Bluish color to skin
- Not waking up or unable to interact
- Refusing to be held or comforted
- Refusing to drink liquids
- Fever with a rash
- Symptoms that improve but then return with higher fever and worse cough

For Adults

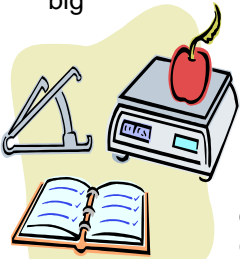
- Difficult breathing or shortness of breath
- Feeling of pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe vomiting
- Sudden return of higher fever and severe cough after improvement

The best treatment for the flu is to prevent it. Wash your hands often, and avoid touching your nose and mouth, as this is a common way for germs to spread. An alcohol-based hand cleaner is also helpful. Try to avoid direct contact with people who are already sick. If you have the flu, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and stay out of public places; this will help stop the spread of the flu. Be vigilant, be healthy, and be aware of the flu danger signs. – Source: Centers for Disease Control

New Year's Resolutions? Should You or Shouldn't You?

Don't make any New Year's resolutions this year. Don't resolve to go on a diet or stop smoking. Don't resolve to make major changes in your life? Sound radical? The truth is that by February, most people have already broken their New Year's resolutions. And, since they have already failed, they give up all the good ideas they had for changing their lifestyles for the better.

Instead of making specific resolutions this year, make some simple lifestyle changes that will eventually lead to the big



changes you really do want to make. Don't resolve to start a tough diet January 1; instead, start by cutting out second helpings at your meals or reducing the number of snacks you have. This is much easier to follow, and there's no sense of failure or giving up if you can't resist that second helping of roast beef one day. Eventually, you may want to give up certain fatty or sweet foods altogether, but work up to it, and you are more likely to succeed.

The same is true for healthy exercise. Starting a rigorous exercise program all at once is frequently

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doomed to failure because we get sore, do too much, and don't want to continue. But if you make a few lifestyle changes, you can begin the road to health. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Park at the end of the parking lot rather than up front; the extra steps are extra exercise. Buy an inexpensive pedometer and try to increase the number of steps you walk every day. Before you know it, you will be healthier and will

likely have lost a few pounds, reduced your blood pressure, and just feel better in general.

So, whatever your usual resolution, don't make it. Instead, start slowly and make steady, gradual changes.

Instead of breaking your resolutions and giving up by February, this year you can find yourself getting healthier every month. Instead of setting yourself up for failure, set yourself up for success. Happy New Year!

Six Steps to Your Goals

- ❖ *Pick realistic goals*—match your abilities.
- ❖ *Make a plan*—pace yourself to get there with small steps.
- ❖ *Face challenges*—create ways to deal with things, such as time or money.
- ❖ *Ask for help*—support from your family and friends helps a lot.
- ❖ *Give yourself a break*—nobody's perfect, even you.
- ❖ *Pat yourself on the back*—even for a small success.

Spots and Tots? Chicken Pox

Is your toddler covered with spots? Even if you've had your child vaccinated against this virus, it could be chicken pox. According to Kids Health, "The vaccine is about 70% to 85% effective at preventing mild infection, and more than 95% effective in preventing moderate or severe disease. People who do develop chickenpox after vaccination have much milder symptoms with fewer skin blisters and a fast recovery." A mild case usually involves spots and bumps over most of the body, with itching being the most common complaint.



Bathing your child in warm water with baking soda or oatmeal added often soothes the itch. If your child has a fever, *do not give aspirin*. Aspirin can cause an additional and far more dangerous illness known as Reyes Syndrome. Use acetaminophen or other non-aspirin medication if needed.

Although chicken pox is most common in children under six, anyone of any age can catch it. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the incubation period after exposure is 12-21 days, and someone with chicken pox is infectious two days before the bumps appear until the bumps have crusted over. The illness is usually far more serious in adults, so a trip to your doctor is in order if adult members of the family get it. Any pregnant woman who has not had the disease

nor been vaccinated and is exposed to chicken pox should be seen by a doctor. The good news for all is that once a healthy child has had chicken pox, he or she is usually immune for the rest of his or her life.

Kids Activity:

The Power of Choice

The Choices are Yours!
 Small steps add up. What can you do to be your best? See the list below (source: U.S. Department of Agriculture) and check off the appropriate items to help take care of your body ... and yourself. You can even add your own!

To eat smart, I can...

- Eat breakfast.
- Drink juice, milk, or water when I'm thirsty—maybe with fast food.
- Use food labels to find good-for-me snacks.
- Drink milk with lunch or supper.
- Order regular-size fast foods.
- Compare my usual amounts to servings on food labels, so I don't overeat.
- Use labels to pick snacks with less fat and less sugar.
- Take fruit in my school bag to snack on when I'm hungry.
- Try a new vegetable this week.
- Eat slowly; stop when I'm full.
- Ask my family to buy healthful snacks, such as fruits and veggies.
- Here's more I can do to eat smart: _____

To sit less and move more, I can

- Watch TV less often.
- Find some active fun to do with my friends after school.
- Walk, bike, or roller-blade to the store, school, or friends' houses.
- Help my family with chores.
- Dance or walk to relieve stress.
- Walk while I talk on the phone.
- Play computer games less often.
- Go out for a community or school sport.
- Here's more I can do to move: _____

Winter Car Emergency Kit

During winter, it's a good idea to keep the following in your car at all times:

- jumper cables
- window scraper
- a large bag of kitty litter (for traction)
- flashlight with extra batteries
- blankets or sleeping bags
- large plastic trash bags for insulation over the blankets
- extra clothing: coats, sweaters, mittens, socks, winter boots
- long-burning candles or tea light candles for light and heat
- empty 3-lb metal coffee can for melting water
- matches
- metal cup
- high protein food (jerky, nutrition bars, etc.)
- water

