

Getting Ready For Colder Weather

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Doctors and nurses who work at Sunnyside Community Hospital & Clinics are encouraging all of us to get our families (and ourselves) ready for colder weather.

“One health care decision that is so important for so many of us is a flu shot,” said Pediatrician Ana Garcia. “

“Just about everyone needs a flu shot,” said Garcia. “In Sunnyside Pediatrics we recommend that all our patients get the flu shot.” The Centers for Disease Control said that this year’s flu shot is approved for people ages 6 months and older according to Dr. Garcia.

Dr. Garcia said some people get very sick with the flu, and some will get well without too many complications. A nasal spray flu vaccine is an option for healthy people over age two and up to age 49, the doctor explained.

Dr. Derek Weaver of Birch Street Medical Center in Grandview said that pregnant women are at high risk of developing flu related complications.

“If you are pregnant, you really need to check with your doctor before getting a flu shot,” Dr. Weaver said. “In our office we look at every patient individually and decide what is the best course of action for their good health. We take special cautions for baby and mom, when the patient is an expectant mother.”

Weaver and Garcia agreed that a flu shot is normally not given to children under the age of 6 months.

“Another important step to good health through the winter months is to stay active,” said Dr. Weaver. “Shorter periods of daylight certainly lessen the likelihood of getting out for a walk or a run after work. It can also be pretty cold for some folks. Combine that with the emphasis on meals and parties through the winter months, and pounds can pile up,” Dr. Weaver said.

The Grandview doctor said every patient is different, but every patient can benefit from doing something to stay active in the winter months.

“Go to the mall and walk inside, if it is too cold to walk out of doors. Find a walking partner and bundle up together,” Weaver said. “Holding each other accountable for some exercise time will benefit both participants.”

He also said the shared discomfort of walking in colder weather (even briefly) will keep both people motivated and more likely to continue exercise.

Dr. Garcia said exercise is just as important for youngsters in the winter time. “We’ll be spending our first winter in the Valley, and my family is looking forward to getting outside and building a snowman and enjoying all the fun that winter can bring.”

Common winter injuries often center on snow removal or falls. The doctors say the best defense is to go slowly when you walk in the cold. Stretching before and after exercise is always a good health idea regardless of the weather.