

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/clinicians-roundtable/protecting-our-pediatric-patients-throughout-the-winter-season/12142/>

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Protecting our Pediatric Patients Throughout the Winter Season

Dr. Shu:

Coming to you from the ReachMD studios in Fort Washington, Pennsylvania, this is the *Clinician's Roundtable*. I'm Dr. Jennifer Shu, and on this episode, I'm going to share some tips on how we can help keep our youngest patients stay safe throughout the winter season.

One important part of staying well during the pandemic is taking care of our patients and our own mental health. As people spend more time attending school remotely, working from home, and generally staying inside more during the winter, it's possible for all of us to suffer from seasonal affective disorder, which in the wintertime can cause symptoms of depression such as sadness, eating and sleeping more, and gaining weight. One way to combat seasonal affective disorder is to take daily walks in bright midday sunlight which can provide 50,000-100,000 lux compared to less than 5,000 on a cloudy day, and less than 500 from indoor home or office lighting. You may also consider using a bright light box which emits 10,000 lux for about 30 minutes each morning. These light boxes are sometimes as small as a deck of cards or a Rubik's cube and may be used while getting ready for work or school.

On the flip side, be sure to get enough sleep at night since sufficient sleep can optimize the immune system. For school-aged kids, that would be 9-12 hours per night, teenagers 8-10, and adults at least 7 hours of sleep per night. It can be helpful to turn off or turn down artificial light, especially from electronics, about an hour or two before going to bed. There are nighttime brightness settings on phones, tablets, and laptops that also serve this purpose, or you can look for a third-party app, or special blue-light blocking glasses to help. In addition to turning off lights and electronics, other sleep hygiene guidelines include keeping a regular sleep schedule, exercising on most days of the week but not right before bedtime, and avoiding caffeine after lunch.

For ReachMD, I'm Dr. Jennifer Shu. To access this episode and others in our series, visit reachmd.com/clinicians-roundtable where you can be part of the knowledge. Thanks for tuning in.