

Top health tips that pediatricians want parents to know

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Being a parent in today's health care environment is especially difficult, with countless competing child health claims constantly vying for attention.

Here is a list from the AMA's What Doctors Want Patients to Know™ series—which provides physicians with a platform to share what they want patients to understand about today's health care headlines—on some important health tips that pediatricians want their parents to know as they seek to help their children grow healthy and strong.

1 Why you can't—and shouldn't—always trust AI on health questions

With the rise of tools powered by augmented intelligence (AI)—often called artificial intelligence—accessing medical information has never been easier, or more overwhelming. But as helpful as these tools can be, the results can sometimes lead to confusion, misinterpretation or even anxiety. That is why it is important to understand how to navigate health information online when searches are powered by AI. Two physicians, including a doctor from [Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group](#), reviewed what patients need to know about navigating AI searches for health tips.

Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group is a member of the [AMA Health System Program](#), which provides enterprise solutions to equip leadership,

physicians and care teams with resources to help drive the future of medicine.

2 Measles is coming back ... for the wrong reasons

There has been a resurgence of measles in the U.S. this year, total of 264 measles cases were reported by 32 jurisdictions. This has prompted concerns from both physicians and the general public. And with vaccination rates faltering in some areas, physicians and public health agencies stress the importance of immunization and vigilance. Knowing how to prevent measles and keep communities safe is key.

Two physicians—including a doctor from [The Permanente Medical Group](#), which is also a member of the AMA Health System Program—took time to discuss what patients need to know about measles.

3 Swimmer's ear is painful, and it's more common in kids

Diving into pools or spending the day at the beach or lake can be the epitome of summer fun, but these aquatic adventures can also come with an unwelcome companion: otitis externa, commonly known as swimmer's ear. This affliction can sideline even the most dedicated water enthusiasts with its painful consequences.

With the incidence of swimmer's ear rising during the warmer months, understanding its causes, symptoms and prevention methods is essential for water enthusiasts of all ages. Three AMA member physicians—including two from [Confluence Health](#) and [Texas Children's Pediatrics](#), which are also members of the AMA Health System Program—shared what patients need to know about swimmer's ear.

4 Strep throat is most common in kids 5–15

We all know that uncomfortable feeling of a sore throat. But there can be multiple reasons why someone's throat hurts, is scratchy or feels unusual. It could be the common cold, flu, COVID-19 or seasonal allergies. But it could also be strep throat, which can occur at any point but typically appears in late autumn, winter or early spring. Knowing what to expect is key to determining if it is strep throat or a viral infection.

Strep throat, or pharyngitis, causes about 5.2 million outpatient visits each year in the U.S. It is also the reason for 2.8 million antibiotic prescriptions annually among non-Medicare age patients, according to the CDC. But strep throat is most common among children 5–15. Meanwhile, strep throat is rare in children younger than 3. Two physicians—including one from [Ochsner Health](#), which is also a member of the AMA Health System Program—outlined what patients need to know about strep throat.

5 There is hope in treating sickle cell anemia

Sickle cell disease—the most common type is known as sickle cell anemia—is a genetic blood disorder that affects millions of people worldwide and continues to pose health challenges for those who live with it. With its roots deeply embedded in the molecular structure of hemoglobin—a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen—sickle cell disease causes the cells to assume a rigid, sickle-like shape, leading to a cascade of complications.

From debilitating pain crises to organ damage and heightened susceptibility to infections, sickle cell anemia takes a toll on patients' health and well-being. Two physicians—including one from [Sanford Health](#), in Fargo, North Dakota, which is also a member of the AMA Health System Program—took time to discuss what patients need to know about sickle cell disease.

6 Cold medicines' side effects are not worth it for kids

There's a reason they call it the common cold. It happens a lot, especially in the wintertime. With runny noses, sore throats and persistent coughs, patients' demand for effective cold remedies is understandable. But does cold medicine help relieve symptoms of the common cold? It depends. Knowing how to find relief from the common cold and what cold medicines to use is key.

There are more than 200 viruses that can cause a cold, but rhinoviruses are the most common type, affecting more than 3 million people in the U.S. each year. Symptoms of the common cold typically peak within three to five days and can include sneezing, stuffy and runny nose, sore throat, coughing and fever. Some symptoms—especially runny or stuffy nose and cough—can last up 14 days but improve over time. Two physicians from members of the AMA Health System Program—[Atlantic Health System](#) and [Texas Children's Pediatrics](#)—explored what patients need to know about cold medicines.

7 Good, trauma-informed care means knowing its variations

Trauma experienced from surviving or witnessing car accidents, natural disasters, mass-casualty events, racism, global pandemics, violence or any distressing experience can shake up a person's life. It can also challenge a person's core beliefs and views of the world. But some patients may not realize they have experienced trauma in their life, which could account for their behavior or physical symptoms. That is where trauma-informed care can help.

The [AMA has adopted policy](#) recognizing trauma-informed care as a practice that acknowledges the widespread impact of trauma on patients, identifies the signs and symptoms of trauma, and treats patients by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into procedures to avoid retraumatization. Two physicians detailed what patients need to know about trauma-informed care.

8 Kids need protection from social media

Many people enjoy staying connected on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. Yet a growing body of research is finding that excessive use—more than three hours per day—can exacerbate mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression, in teens and young adults. It can also lead to isolation and fear of missing out.

That's why it is important to understand the potentially harmful impact of social media platforms for younger users. Two AMA members laid out what doctors want patients to know about the potentially harmful effects of social media.

When it comes to effective doctor-patient communication, it's important that both parties are speaking from a base of shared knowledge. The AMA's What Doctors Want Patients to Know series explores dozens of health topics, including [inflammatory bowel disease](#), [vertigo](#) and [microplastics](#).