

Happy December! I hope everyone enjoyed Thanksgiving with family and friends. Our family enjoyed Matthew and Michael being back from college for the holiday and we made it out to see Wicked (apparently with everyone else in Louisville who wasn't at Moana 2)! I definitely give Wicked two thumbs up, although it was a bit on the long side. I'll be curious to hear what kids under 12 think of the movie.

PRICING UPDATE STARTING DECEMBER 10th!

We are excited to announce an important change to our pricing structure that we believe will benefit our current families and make billing easier to understand for new families. Starting December 10, 2024 we will be moving to a new **flat fee of \$165/month for all ages** for new enrolling families.

What this means for you (families enrolled before 12/10/2024):

- **If you're currently paying more than \$165/month per child**, your rate will automatically be reduced to the new flat rate.
- **If you're paying less than \$165/month**, your current rate will be honored and **will not increase**.
- As your children age, we will continue to offer you discounted rates to reflect the pricing model we had when you enrolled. For example:
 - When your child turns 6, their rate will drop to **\$160/month**.
 - Once they turn 13, their rate will further decrease to **\$140/month**.
 - This discount is only available to families enrolled **before 12/10/2024**.

What this means for new members:

Going forward, the monthly fee for new members will be **\$165**, rather than a variable price based on age. We will also continue to offer our **\$500 family maximum**, ensuring that larger families benefit from capped pricing.

Why the change?

What drove the pricing change?

- We believe a flat rate will be simpler to communicate, and easier for families to understand the true cost of their membership compared to the age-based model.
- This will make our model more cost-effective and appealing for families with younger children, a group who would benefit immensely from the Direct Primary Care model.

To clarify, your membership cost will either stay the same or decrease!

It is important to us that our members feel valued for your loyalty to our practice. We are committed to continuing to provide the highest quality care at affordable rates, and we hope this new pricing model makes it easier for your family to enjoy the full benefits of our services.

If you have any questions about the new pricing structure or how it will affect you, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to help!

If you know people with kids ages 6 and up who would like to join before prices increase, let them know they have until December 9th to sign up!

Speaking of finances, if you haven't used FSA/HSA in the past, take a look at whether or not your company offers this as an option as we have lots of families who pay their Direct Pediatric fees via FSA/HSA.

CHECK OUT THE NEW VIDEO!

We've added a video to our web site homepage summing up why Direct Pediatrics was created and the experience our doctors and families have been having so far. Thanks to the families for volunteering their time to participate. You can see the video here...

<https://www.directpediatrics.com/#video>

COLD & FLU, WHAT TO DO?

1. First, what's the difference between colds and flu? Flu is caused by the Influenza virus and colds are caused by 1 of 200+ respiratory viruses, the most common is Rhinovirus. Colds are usually milder and are more likely to include a runny or stuffy nose. The flu tends to start more suddenly. While a flu might have a runny or stuffy nose, it is more likely to also include a fever, chills, headache, sore throat, cough, muscle/body aches and/or fatigue.
2. How are they similar? Both cold and the flu are viruses (rather than bacteria like strep). This means that antibiotics will have no effect on them and it's up to our immune system to kill these viruses. Both are spread by respiratory droplets (so teach your kids how to cover their mouths when they cough)! Both tend to occur in the cold weather months
3. My kid caught a cold/flu because they went out without a hat right? Nope- cold weather viruses occur more in the cold weather because the cold weather forces us to spend more time inside where germs spread more easily. One of my kids wore shorts and a t-shirt every day to school for all of 6th grade regardless of weather (due to a bet with a friend). Although he complained about being freezing cold on some days, he never got sick because being cold does not make you sick. By the end of winter he agreed that it was a dumb bet.

4. What can I do for a cold? Since colds are caused by viruses, you're just waiting for your child's immune system to kick in to kill the virus. In the meantime, it's all about treating the symptoms. Nasal saline irrigation devices such as the Neti pot, Neil Med sinus rinse bottles or the Navage nasal irrigation system are great for kids. For babies and toddlers, nasal suction devices like the bulb suction, nose Frida, or electric nasal aspirators are certainly useful, especially before bed time. Honey (from the grocery store, not in medicine) has been proven to be the most effective treatment for cough (for children older than 12 months) and Vick's Vapo-rub on the chest has been found to relieve cold symptoms.

5. What can I do for the flu? Get your flu vaccine. Even if it doesn't prevent the flu, those who have had the seasonal vaccine recover in about half the time compared to those who don't get the flu vaccine. There are 2 antiviral medications (Tamiflu for all ages and Xofluza for children 5 and up) that shorten the duration of the flu by 1-2 days. These medicines only work within the first 48 hours of the onset of symptoms and stop viral replication of the flu viral particles. I don't love Tamiflu due to the common side effects (nausea/vomiting) and the bad taste, but Xofluza is a single dose with minimal side effects (but can be hard to find and expensive if not covered by insurance). Otherwise, Tylenol/ibuprofen, honey (for kids older than 12 months), fluids and rest are the key to flu recovery.

6. What about cough/cold medicines? These should be avoided as they have been shown to have no positive effect and increase your child's chances of developing pneumonia by suppressing their cough

7. Extra vitamins? The latest research has not supported any vitamins shortening the duration of cold or flu

8. When should I worry about colds or the flu? It's usually all about the breathing. If your child's cold or flu is causing them to breathe faster than usual and/or use extra muscles to breathe (even after you've suctioned their nose), please have them seen ASAP. While we expect appetite to decrease during any illness, if your baby's fluid intake has decreased so that they are making fewer than 3 wet diaper in 24 hours, they should be seen.

9. How long will this last? Colds and flu can last anywhere between 3-10 days. Colds and those vaccinated for flu tend to last around 4-5 days, while those

unvaccinated for flu may have the virus last 8-10 days. Generally the virus peaks somewhere between 3-5 days and gradually improves.

BOOK REVIEW

Gist: The Essence of Raising Life-Ready Kids, by Michael Anderson and Timothy Johanson

Full credit for this recommendation goes to Dr. Kyle Stewart as we were discussing the pediatric books that we've come across and he recommended this one to me. This book presents a straightforward practical approach to parenting. What really impressed me was that the strategies described could be used equally to deal with a toddler not wanting to go to bed or an out-of-control teen with serious substance abuse concerns. It gives parents a framework to prioritize what concerns need to be addressed first and what to do. It also fits in nicely with any parenting approach that you do. One of the take-home points is that many of us often over-parent and that kids learn much more from experience rather than us telling them what to do or not to do. The authors say that if your kids are doing well, you might only have to "parent them" a few times a month!

If you come across books that seem exceptionally good, please share them with me. I've had a lot of patients (boys and girls of all ages) recently struggling with body image concerns and I'm definitely trying to find some good resources both to improve my expertise as well as possible workbooks for these kids.

Have a wonderful December and I'm very thankful to be a part of your family's pediatric journey!

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