Be Smart with Skin Care During Winter

If you packed your sunscreen away with your bathing suits and tank tops, dig it out. Protecting skin is important in winter, too, even on cloudy days. “You may not feel the heat, but the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) rays can still do damage,” says plastic surgeon Emile Picarella, M.D.

Year-round sunscreen use can defend against skin cancer, age spots, and wrinkles. Choose a broad-spectrum product with an SPF of at least 15. Be sure it blocks both UVA and UVB rays.

About 30 minutes before heading outside, apply sunscreen to your face, neck, scalp, and ears, as well as the backs of your hands and other places likely to be exposed to the sun. Also use lip balm or gloss with an SPF of 15 or more.

Just because it’s winter doesn’t mean you should stop checking your skin for any changes, too. “It’s important, particularly for older adults, to keep an eye on skin spots and growths,” adds Dr. Picarella. “The effects of sun exposure on skin are cumulative, which means the risk of developing skin cancer increases with age.”

If detected early, most skin cancers—even melanoma, the most serious form—are curable. That’s why it’s important to make regular skin self-exams a habit. A monthly self-exam should include every area of the skin, including the face, neck, hands, back, scalp, soles of the feet, and backs of the ears. A handheld mirror can help to check hard-to-see areas.

Check Your Skin

If you’re concerned about moles or other areas on your skin, join Baptist Medical Clinic in Madison for a FREE skin screening. See the calendar for event details.
The Human Body’s 640 Muscles suggest it was made to move. But thanks to technology, we can now work, bank, shop, and commute by only taking a few steps. As a result, many people spend up to eight or nine hours a day sedentary.

Stand Up at Work
Chained to a desk? Time to break free. In one study, a sitting/standing workstation reduced sedentary time by more than an hour a day. Another study found standing desks burn an extra 114 calories a day for students.

If you can’t change your workspace, try these suggestions from David Carpenter, Director of Madison Healthplex Performance Training Center:

:: Ask for more casual days. Research suggests employees are more active in less formal attire.

Sit Less, Live Longer: Ways to Fit More Motion into Your Day

Get Fit After Hours
If you still need help squeezing fitness into your day, Healthplex Performance Center in Madison includes an after-hours fitness area. Call 601-856-7757 for membership information.

Is Emotional Eating Sabotaging Your Weight-Loss Efforts?

Do you reach for a bowl of ice cream when you’re feeling sad or a slice of pizza when you’re stressed? Everyone eats for reasons other than hunger now and then. “But the journal *Obesity* found that people who ate in response to their feelings were much less likely to lose weight and keep it off,” says Jana Woodruff, R.D., L.D., of Baptist Nutrition and Bariatric Center.

To find out if your emotions are affecting eating habits, keep a food journal. Write down everything you consume for five days. Note how much you consumed, the time of day, and your mood or feelings at the time.

:: Set a computer or phone alarm each hour. When it goes off, take a three-minute walk down the hall or a staircase.

:: Jiggle your foot, shift in your seat, or chew a stick of gum. “Fidgeting can burn 350 calories daily,” says Carpenter.

Stand Up at Home
Start by keeping a log of TV time. You might be shocked to add up how many hours you lose in front of the tube. For the average American, it’s more than 150 each month. Try setting a daily limit, and:

:: Avoiding channel surfing. After your favorite show, hit the off switch.

:: Lifting dumbbells, stretching resistance bands, or pacing around the room during commercials

:: Taking breaks to do something active

Get Help Online
Check out Baptist Nutrition and Bariatric Center’s podcast on food cravings. Listen to the podcast online at mbhs.org/healthsource.

Whole-Grain Party Mix

**Ingredients**

2. Add remaining ingredients and stir until cereal, nuts, and pretzels are coated.
3. Bake for an hour, stirring about every 15 minutes.
4. Let cool and store in an airtight container.

**SERVES 20**

**PER SERVING:** Calories 137, Total fat 6 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Sodium 160 mg, Total carbohydrates 19 g, Fiber 3 g, Protein 4 g

**Directions**

1. ¹⁄³ cup olive oil
2. 2 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
3. to 4 tbsp. salt-free garlic and herb seasoning
4. 5 cups whole-grain waffle-style cereal
5. 2 cups whole-grain “O” cereal
6. 1 cup unsalted, dry roasted soy nuts
7. 1 cup mini-pretzels (whole wheat is best)

**Get Fit After Hours**

If you still need help squeezing fitness into your day, Healthplex Performance Center in Madison includes an after-hours fitness area. Call 601-856-7757 for membership information.

www.mbhs.org • Baptist Health Line: 601-948-6262
Q: What is the thyroid?
A: The thyroid gland is located in the front part of the neck, in front of the trachea and esophagus. Normally, it cannot be seen and usually cannot be felt. It has a left and right lobe. These lobes are connected by a bridge of tissue to form a dumbbell or butterfly-shaped organ.

The thyroid gland takes up iodine from the food we eat. It also makes several important hormones. These thyroid hormones help regulate the body’s metabolism, or how the body creates and uses energy.

Q: If I have thyroid nodules does that mean I have thyroid cancer?
A: Most thyroid nodules are not cancerous. They are sometimes found as lumps on the neck. People can get thyroid nodules at any age, but older adults get them more often. Without a biopsy and other tests, however, it is very hard to tell what a thyroid nodule is made of and whether it is cancer.

Q: Who usually gets thyroid cancer?
A: Women get thyroid cancer more often than men do. Also, people between the ages of 45 and 69 are more likely to get thyroid cancer than people of other ages.

Q: What are the symptoms of thyroid cancer?
A: Some of the symptoms of thyroid cancer include: a lump over the thyroid or elsewhere in the neck, neck pain, neck swelling, hoarseness, trouble swallowing, trouble breathing, and a cough that lasts for a long time. These symptoms can be caused by many other things besides thyroid cancer. It is important to be checked by a doctor if you have any of these symptoms.

Q: How is thyroid cancer treated?
A: Thyroid cancer may be treated with surgery, radioactive iodine therapy, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, or a combination of these.

Calcium May Cut Women’s Colorectal Cancer Risk

Besides helping build bones, calcium also might help women prevent colorectal cancer. “One study found women who consumed at least 800 milligrams of calcium in their diet daily had a 25 percent lower risk for colorectal cancer,” says Jane-Claire Williams, M.D. “This was compared with women who got less than 400 milligrams of dietary calcium a day.”

Another group of women, who took more than 800 milligrams of calcium in the form of supplements, also lowered their risk for colorectal cancer by about 25 percent.

Experts advise women up to age 50 to get 1,000 milligrams of calcium a day. Besides protecting against colorectal cancer, calcium can help keep muscles, nerves, bones, teeth, and blood vessels healthy. Aim for two to three servings of dairy a day. A serving equals one of the following:

- 1 cup of milk
- 8 ounces of yogurt
- 1½ ounces of cheese

Women older than age 50 need more calcium to help fight bone loss. They should get 1,200 milligrams each day.

Important Information About Common Cancers

Colon cancer is one of seven common cancers that medical experts will talk about at our upcoming panel discussion, “Save Your Life: Key Things Everyone Must Know About Cancer.” Don’t miss this! See the calendar for event details.
Varicose Veins: More Than a Cosmetic Problem?

BULGING, TWISTED VARICOSE VEINS can make you self-conscious about your legs. Sometimes, they limit more than your fashion choices. “Without lifestyle changes or treatment, varicose veins can lead to more serious conditions,” says Julie Grissom Cooley, N.P.C.

Your Veins, Explained
The veins in your leg must work against gravity to shuttle blood from your lower limbs back up to your heart. Sometimes, the one-way valves that keep blood moving in the right direction weaken or malfunction. As a result, blood backs up and your veins expand, swell, and twist beneath your skin’s surface.

As many as 25 million Americans have varicose veins. Risk increases:
:: With age
:: During pregnancy
:: In heavy people

:: Because of prolonged sitting or standing
:: In people with a family history of weaker valves

Heed These Warning Signs
Sometimes, varicose veins have no other symptoms. But they can cause:
:: A heavy feeling in the ankles or legs
:: Throbbing or cramping pain
:: Swollen ankles or feet
:: Fatigue
:: Discolored, hard, thickened, or itchy skin
:: Open wounds called ulcers

See your doctor if you have these signs. He or she will do tests to check whether your varicose veins prevent blood from traveling back up to your heart. “This condition, called chronic venous insufficiency, eventually affects as many as 20 percent of adults,” explains Grissom Cooley. “Many need treatment to avoid blood clots or other serious complications.”

Treatment Improves Blood Flow
Lifestyle changes can help, especially if your varicose veins don’t cause pain. Your doctor may recommend:
:: Taking frequent breaks from standing or sitting
:: Elevating your legs frequently and not crossing them
:: Exercising regularly to improve blood flow and muscle tone
:: Avoiding high-heeled shoes
:: Wearing compression stockings

Medical treatments can improve the appearance of varicose veins and treat chronic venous insufficiency. Options include:
:: Laser, heat, or chemical therapies that close off the veins
:: Surgery to remove small veins
:: Microphlebectomy, minor surgery to remove small varicose veins

Got a Question About Varicose Veins?
Varicose veins is one of several heart and circulatory topics our panel of cardiovascular experts will discuss on February 6 during “Straight to the Heart.” See the calendar for event details.
A Racing, Pounding Heartbeat: When You Should Be Concerned

A HEART THAT'S RACING OR POUNDING may be nothing to worry about. But sometimes these sensations—called heart palpitations—can signal a more serious condition.

Lots of triggers can cause heart palpitations. Common ones include:

:: Exercise
:: Stress, anxiety, or fear
:: Fever
:: Caffeine, nicotine, or alcohol
:: Drugs like diet pills and decongestants, or certain asthma, thyroid, or heart medications
:: An imbalance of minerals in the blood
:: Menopause
:: Iron deficiency
:: Heart disease or heart structural problems

Abnormal Rhythm

“Heart palpitations may signal an abnormal heart rhythm, or arrhythmia,” says Mike Bensler, M.D. “Other symptoms of this condition include fainting, chest pain, dizziness, sweating, pale skin, or shortness of breath.”

With arrhythmic heart disease, the heart may beat too fast, too slow, or irregularly.

Certain types of medications may be used to help regulate the heart rhythm.

Implantable devices, such as a permanent pacemaker or defibrillator, can also be used to regulate the heart rate.

Call a Doctor

If you experience unexplained heart palpitations, talk with a doctor. Call a doctor right away if:

:: You frequently feel more heartbeats
:: Your usual heart palpitations feel different
:: Your pulse is more than 100 beats a minute and not related to exercise, anxiety, or fever

A medical history, a physical exam, and diagnostic tests can help determine the cause and seriousness of heart palpitations. An electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG) will provide information about your heart’s electrical activity and condition. You may also need to wear an external heart monitor for a day or two to track your heart rhythm.

Check Your Heart for $25

Baptist’s annual Heart Day Screening is scheduled for February 8, with screenings by appointment. See the calendar for event details.

What Is Rheumatic Heart Disease?

Rheumatic heart disease is a condition in which rheumatic fever causes permanent damage to heart valves. “The process generally begins with an infection caused by streptococcus bacteria,” explains cardiologist Chris Waterer, M.D. “In some cases, strep throat or scarlet fever can eventually progress to rheumatic fever.”

Your healthcare provider will determine specific treatment for rheumatic heart disease based on:

:: Your overall health and medical history
:: Extent of the disease
:: Your tolerance for specific medications, procedures, or therapies
:: Expectations for the course of the disease
:: Your opinion or preference

Treatment depends in large part on how much damage has been done to your heart valves. It may even include surgery to replace or repair a valve.

Because rheumatic fever is the cause of rheumatic heart disease, the best treatment is to prevent rheumatic fever from occurring. Penicillin and other antibiotics can usually treat strep throat (a group A streptococcus bacterial infection) and stop acute rheumatic fever from developing.

Heed Heart Attack Warning Signs

Anyone who has chest pain that worsens over a five-minute period should call for emergency medical help, according to guidelines released by the American Heart Association (AHA). Worsening chest pain, especially if accompanied by shortness of breath, weakness, or light-headedness, can be a sign of a heart attack. The more quickly a person having a heart attack is treated, the more likely the person is to survive without long-term complications, the AHA says.
Midlife Moms: Having a Baby Later in Life

MOVING THROUGH YOUR MID-30s and pondering motherhood? You’re not alone. More American women are postponing having children. “Fortunately, most women who choose to delay childbirth until after age 35 will have healthy pregnancies and deliver healthy infants,” says OB/GYN Amanda Nicols, M.D. But research shows that risks to both moms and babies increase with advancing age. Women can improve their chances by adopting healthy habits and getting good healthcare before they conceive and once they’re pregnant.

Different Set of Risks
Older women may need to deal with issues during pregnancy that don’t apply to younger women. Health problems such as high blood pressure and diabetes become more common as women age. And the physical demands of pregnancy increase the risk for complications for women as they grow older.

Women older than age 35 are more likely than younger women to have:
- Miscarriage
- Diabetes or high blood pressure related to pregnancy
- Ectopic pregnancy, in which the fetus grows outside the uterus
- Delivery by cesarean section
- Placenta previa, in which the placenta covers the uterine opening
- Low birth weight
- Twins
- Babies with a genetic disorder

Pre-Conception Care Is Key
“Start taking care of yourself before you become pregnant,” says Dr. Nicols. Because of the increased risks, health experts advise older women planning to become pregnant to see a healthcare provider first.

Steps that can help prevent problems during pregnancy include the following:
- Take 400 micrograms of folic acid daily.
- Quit smoking and drinking alcohol.

Once You’re Pregnant
Good prenatal care is a must for every mom, but women older than 35 may need more doctor visits and extra tests. Follow your healthcare provider’s guidelines about diet, vitamins, exercise, and tests.

Thinking About a Baby After 35?
The Birthplace offers midlife moms a number of anxiety-relieving services, such as board certified OB/GYNs who are on site 24/7. Find out more online at mbhs.org/healthsource.
Facelifts: Restoring That Youthful Look

Your facial muscles and re-drape the skin over your face and neck. This gives your face a smoother, firmer appearance while avoiding a windswept look. Any post-operative discomfort or nausea is easily handled with oral medication. Swelling and numbness are the two most common immediate complaints. Other more serious complications can include infection, hematoma, and nerve damage.

"The best candidates for a facelift are those whose face and/or neck have begun to sag, but whose skin still has some elasticity," says Dr. Smith. "The procedure also works best on people whose bone structure is strong and well-defined."

Science hasn’t found a cure for aging. Crow’s feet and other wrinkles are still a part of getting older. But for anyone who wants to enhance his or her appearance, a facelift might be the way to go.

Facelifts aren’t as big a procedure as some people think they are. "They are almost always done as an outpatient procedure, meaning you don’t have to stay in the hospital," explains plastic surgeon Adrian R. Smith, M.D. "In fact, some candidates can even opt to receive a local anesthetic, meaning they’re awake for the facelift."

A facelift involves removing some of the excess facial fat that has built up over the years. Once the plastic surgeon removes this fat, he or she will tighten your facial muscles and re-drape the skin over your face and neck. This gives your face a smoother, firmer appearance while avoiding a windswept look.

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Tackling Celiac Disease

More and more children are being diagnosed with celiac disease. "This is a digestive disorder in which a person can’t tolerate gluten—a protein found in wheat, rye, and barley," explains Jason Murphy, M.D. "Even the tiniest amount of gluten can cause harm."

Although symptoms vary and can affect many parts of the body, symptoms in children tend to include:

- Stomach bloating and pain
- Chronic diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Constipation
- Pale, foul-smelling, or fatty stool
- Weight loss
- Being irritable and tired

Managing a Gluten-Free Life

Only one treatment helps celiac disease: a gluten-free diet. "For most kids, avoiding gluten will stop symptoms within days and heal the intestine within six months," says Dr. Murphy.

Following a gluten-free diet means not eating most grains, pasta, cereal, and many processed foods—but the good news is, more and more gluten-free products are available at grocery stores these days. Plus, fresh meat, poultry, fish, eggs, rice, fruit, and veggies can be eaten because they don’t contain gluten.

Take 10 Minutes to Learn More

"Managing Celiac Disease: A Gluten-Free Diet" is a 10-minute podcast packed with helpful details from a registered dietitian, including potential pitfalls, shopping and menu tips for eating at home, and ideas for eating out. Listen online at mbhs.org/healthsource.
If you’ve had a urinary tract infection (UTI), you know the feeling. Pain and burning often occur when you go to the bathroom. “But some older adults with UTIs display a surprising symptom—mental problems that mimic dementia,” says Neil Haraway, M.D.

UTIs, Defined
UTIs occur when germs invade the bladder, urethra, or other nearby structures. Women, older adults, and people using catheters have a higher risk.

Some older adults with UTIs experience fever, pain with urination, incontinence, and cloudy or foul-smelling urine. But they are more likely than younger people to feel weak, shaky, and tired, or have incontinence or abdominal pain.

Many older adults with UTIs also develop a mental condition called delirium. “The infection causes their bodies to produce chemicals that change the way their brains work,” explains Dr. Haraway.

Over a few hours or days, your loved one may suddenly:
- Seem more confused
- Have trouble paying attention
- Slur speech
- Slip in and out of consciousness
- Act anxious, fearful, and suspicious
- Seem listless or unaware

In one recent study, half of older women with UTIs had delirium. Many had no other symptoms.

Stay Alert for Major Shifts
Tell your healthcare team if your loved one displays sudden, dramatic mental changes. The doctor can perform tests for infection and prescribe antibiotics or other treatments.

Fortunately, treating the underlying UTI also will improve your loved one’s thinking abilities. However, it may take weeks or months for delirium to fade.

Help for Older Loved Ones
Baptist Adult Day Health Services offers daily care for older and dependent adults, with locations in Jackson and Clinton. Registered nurses are on site and participants enjoy nutritious meals. Memory care services are available for adults with dementia. See details online at mbhs.org/healthsource.
(Image -56x2 to 604x784)

**Guard Your Baby from Rotavirus**

ROTA VIRUS IS the most common cause of severe diarrhea in infants. “This highly contagious virus can live a long time outside the body,” says pediatrician Gordon H. Meador, M.D. “It can be found in the stool of an infected child before, during, and after symptoms show up.”

If that child skips hand-washing after using the bathroom, another child can pick up the virus. This happens when the second child touches the same objects and puts his hand to his mouth.

**Signs and Symptoms**

Rotavirus initially starts off with fever, progressing to vomiting for a couple of days. This is followed by diarrhea, which can cause dehydration.

The virus can infect children more than once. The first case tends to be the worst. After each case, kids are less likely to come down with a new infection.

**Effective Protection**

A vaccine called RotaTeq® can protect babies from rotavirus. “The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the vaccine for babies up to 6 months old,” says Dr. Meador. “It’s given by mouth as a liquid. Infants get three doses, at 2 months, 4 months, and 6 months. The vaccine is not meant for older kids.”

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**Keep in Mind**

Remember, this vaccine only shields kids from rotavirus. Here’s what you can do to help protect your family from other viruses:

:: Make sure your children wash their hands after using the bathroom and before eating.
:: Wash your hands after changing diapers.
:: Clean affected surfaces quickly with household chlorine bleach-based products.
:: Wash soiled clothing as soon as possible.

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**OMG: Bullies Turn to Texting**

Cellphones may be the new tools of choice for schoolyard bullies. More kids and teens are being victimized by text message.

About 24 percent of youths ages 10 to 15 said they had been harassed by text in a new survey, up from 14 percent the year before.

Bullies sent rude or threatening comments, spread rumors, or made unwanted sexual advances.

Researchers say texts are becoming the main form of communication for kids and teens. If your child or teen texts, have a conversation about what’s appropriate and what’s not.

**Build Your Daughter’s Self-Worth**

Help your daughter through the treacherous waters of adolescence. Join us for our “Mother-Daughter Brunch: Fearfully and Wonderfully Made.” See the calendar for event details.

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**Online Help for New Parents**

“Caring For Your Newborn: When to Call the Doctor” is a helpful article available in Baptist’s online health library. See it at mbhs.org/healthsource.
CANCER NEWS

Save Your Skin Screening
Worried about a mole or mark on your skin? Don’t take a chance with skin cancer. Take advantage of this FREE skin screening offered by Baptist Medical Clinic in Madison. Registration is requested and space is limited. Online registration is not available.
Date: February 27
Time: 5:30 p.m. start; screenings held by appointment
Location: Baptist Medical Clinic | Family Medicine–Madison (401 Baptist Drive, off Highland Colony Parkway)
To register, call 601-948-6262.

Save Your Life: Key Things Everyone Must Know About Cancer
It happens every day: A young, otherwise healthy person experiences symptoms that lead to the shocking discovery of cancer. Don’t let it happen to you! Come to this important panel discussion with five specialists discussing the best ways to prevent the most common cancers: colon, breast, lung, skin, uterine, ovarian, and cervical. Find out what symptoms to look for to detect cancer early—the key to survival. Panel members include Jane-Claire Williams, M.D.; James L. Moore, Jr., M.D.; Phillip Ley, M.D.; Michael Koury, M.D.; and Emile Picarella, M.D. The session will conclude with a Q & A. Limited seating is available.
Date: March 6
Time: 6 p.m., appetizers at 5:30 p.m.
Location: The Belhaven, Conference Room
Cost: $7 per person

HEART HEALTH NOW

Straight to the Heart
Even if no one in your family has had heart problems, age is an unavoidable risk factor for heart disease. Especially if you are older than age 40, it’s important to be aware of conditions and symptoms that can lead to serious health issues. Fortunately, there are proven ways to stay young at heart, physically and spiritually. Join cardiovascular specialists as they discuss high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart murmurs, varicose veins, leg pain from poor circulation, signs and symptoms of heart attack, and spiritual heart health. The medical panel includes Alfredo Figueroa, M.D.; William Harris, M.D.; Julie Grissom Cooley, N.P.-C.; Daniel Ramirez, M.D.; Chris Waterer, M.D.; and William Harper, M.D. Limited seating is available.
Date: February 6
Time: 6 p.m., appetizers at 5:30 p.m.
Location: Table 100
Cost: $7 per person

FOR WOMEN

Getting It RIGHT This Year!
Have you tried and tried to improve your health? Every year, you’ve said that you would start eating right, exercising, and taking care of yourself, but ... you haven’t. Come join us in starting the new year by learning to care for yourself, so that you can care for the rest...
of your family. Featured speakers are OB/GYN Erika Tanner, M.D.; registered dietitian Amber Westbrook, R.D.; and a fitness coach from the Healthplex Performance Center.

**Date:** January 14  
**Time:** 6 p.m., light refreshments at 5:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Baptist Madison Campus Community Room  
**Cost:** FREE

### Mother Daughter Brunch: Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

It’s not easy being a girl today. Your adolescent daughter may already be concerned about changes taking place in her body, peer pressure, and fitting in. At this brunch for girls and their mothers, OB/GYN Barbie Sullivan, M.D., will help prepare adolescents for what’s ahead with their changing bodies. Family therapist Alicia Slater, L.M.F.T., will discuss peer pressure, self-image, and communication issues. Limited seating is available.

**Date:** February 1  
**Time:** 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.  
**Location:** Baptist Madison Campus Community Room  
**Cost:** $5 per person

### ALL IN THE FAMILY

### Arthritis and Pain

Osteoarthritis is a common cause of pain in joints in the hands, knees, hips, and shoulders.

Find out what treatments are available to relieve pain, including medications and outpatient procedures. The featured speaker is orthopedic surgeon Brian Johnson, M.D.

**Date:** January 17  
**Time:** 11:45 a.m.  
**Location:** Baptist Madison Community Room  
**Cost:** $7 for optional lunch

### What a Pain in the Neck

A painful neck can be, well, a real pain in the neck. Join neurosurgeon Lynn Stringer, M.D., to find out what self-help measures are safe and effective for relieving discomfort, and when it's time to get medical attention.

**Date:** March 28  
**Time:** 11:45 a.m.  
**Location:** Baptist for Women Conference Room  
**Cost:** $7 for optional lunch

### Need a Doctor?

Browse our online physician directory on your computer, tablet, or phone. You can even request a referral online!

Go to [mbhs.org/doctors](http://mbhs.org/doctors).

Online registration available for most classes. Visit [www.mbhs.org](http://www.mbhs.org) today!
Got a Cough? When to Pop a Lozenge, When to Call the Doctor

“EHH-HEMM …” Your cough is bugging co-workers and your fellow moviegoers. It’s also grating on your nerves and maybe even keeping you up at night. It’s time you put a chokehold on that nagging cough.

For starters, it helps to know what kind of cough you’ve got: dry or productive. “Productive coughs bring up phlegm, while dry coughs don’t,” explains Lauren Treadwell, M.D., of Baptist Medical Clinic—Northtown. “Both types can be acute or chronic, meaning they last more than eight weeks.” Short-lived coughs often are caused by colds, while the chronic variety may be due to post-nasal drainage from allergies, asthma, smoking, and certain medicines.

You may be able to stifle your cough on your own. If you’ve got a dry cough, ease the tickle in your throat with a lozenge. A steamy shower also can help soothe your throat.

For a productive cough, try an over-the-counter cough medicine with guaifenesin. This may help you bring up phlegm. Drink plenty of fluids, too.

“If your cough doesn’t clear up in two or three weeks, see your doctor,” says Dr. Treadwell. “You also should see a physician if you cough up blood or thick, yellow-green phlegm. Both could be signs of a more serious problem.”

Family Doctors Available for Same-Day Appointments
Baptist Medical Clinic | Family Medicine has locations across the metro Jackson area. If you have a cough that won’t go away, call 855-SEE-U-TODAY (855-733-8863) for the next available appointment.