

# Pedia Tracks

Tracking, what's new for you!

Spring 2012

## Scheduling Appointments AND Maintaining HIPAA Guidelines

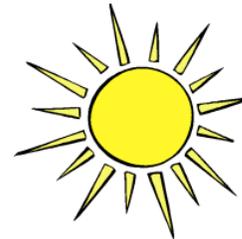
The HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) laws were written, among other reasons, to protect individuals' privacy. All medical practices are required to uphold patient privacy by following HIPAA guidelines. This includes **scheduling appointments**.

Receptionists can violate the privacy guidelines when making appointments at their front desks, by repeating addresses, names, or other protected information. Certainly these lapses are unintentional. Nevertheless, we are asking patients to help us comply with these guidelines by making appointments through our Central Appointments line at **651-256-6714**.

There will be times when our receptionists are asked to help out due to heavy volume. If the PYAM staff member helping you with an appointment asks more questions than usual it is probably their effort to keep your private information private. Please try to be patient if this happens. We want to answer all our patients' calls as soon as possible but we have to abide by the law.

You can help yourself and others when calling for an appointment by having the following information at hand:

- What kind of visit does your child need? A well exam? Or does he need to be seen for an illness or injury. Tell us the symptoms.
- How many children do you wish to schedule?
- Tell us your preferred doctor and clinic location.
- As a courtesy to our physicians and other patients please call to cancel appointments that you can't keep—someone else might need that time with the doctor.



## Runny Noses—Virus or Allergies?

Determining the culprit that has your child's nose working overtime isn't always easy. In March when there is still snow on the ground, a runny nose has to be caused by a cold or flu virus, right? It would make sense, except that some notorious irritants like maple trees are budding out and blooming that early—releasing the pollen that for many causes allergic reactions. To complicate things further, allergies produce conditions in the human respiratory tract that are inviting to viruses and bacteria. What starts out as an allergic response can end up as an earache, cold or sinus infection.

Sometimes it's easy to know the cause. For example when the entire family is sick at the same time; you can assume that 'the crud' is to blame. But other times it's less obvious. Look at the chart below and see how colds and allergies can affect us differently.

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| Characteristic       | Cold   | Allergy  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Duration             | Three—14 days  | Days to months—as long as you are exposed to the allergen  |
| Time of year         | Most often in winter but always possible                     | Any time of the year but can also be seasonal              |
| Onset of Symptoms    | Symptoms appear in a few days after infection with the virus | Symptoms can begin instantly with exposure to the allergen |
| Symptom              | Cold   | Allergy  |
| Cough                | Often  | Sometimes  |
| Aches                | Sometimes  | Never  |
| Fatigue              | Sometimes  | Sometimes  |
| Fever                | Rarely   | Never  |
| Itchy, watery eyes   | Sometimes  | Often  |
| Sore throat          | Often  | Sometimes  |
| Runny or stuffy nose | Often; usually yellow mucous                                 | Often; usually clear mucous                                |

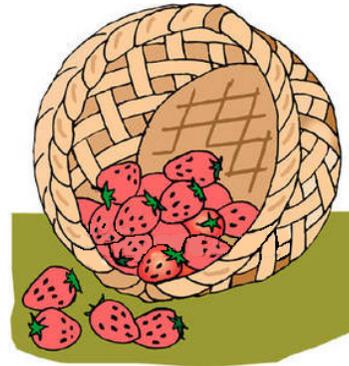
(Chart adapted from WebMD)

What are environmental allergens? They are substances that occur indoors— like mold and mildew spores, dust mites and pet dander; or outdoors—like tree and plant pollens—that trigger allergic responses.

It is important to find out if your child is suffering from allergies for several reasons. When exposed to an allergen our body tries to get rid of the substance by sneezing and creating mucous. As mentioned above, this sets the stage for bacterial and viral infections. Kids with allergies can go from one infection to another. In addition, children with allergies can struggle with inadequate and poor quality sleep. And lastly, there is a connection between allergies and asthma. Not all children who have environmental allergies develop asthma, but some do. Allergies, asthma and eczema are all related and each can flare when confronted with allergens in the environment.

Many outdoor allergens are seasonal and affect people in the spring or fall. Indoor irritants can affect people continuously. Keeping track of the time and circumstances that your child has the most trouble can yield an important clue. Other things to look for are a perpetually runny nose, itchy, watery eyes, snoring and sleep issues.

If you suspect that there might be more behind your child’s runny nose than just another cold, discuss it with your pediatrician. There are simple tests that can determine whether or not your child has allergies. Most importantly, there are many ways to lessen your child’s physical symptoms to make her more comfortable and help prevent repeated infections.



## READY, SET, GARDEN!

A vegetable garden is a wonderful thing, but so ephemeral! Every year it has to be started from scratch all over again. This is part of the fun, being able to try new plants or grow more of this crop or the other; still, it would be nice to have some permanence in the garden.

Small fruits can be permanent features and some are relatively easy to deal with. Here are some to consider:

**Rhubarb** is a plant that could be called the ‘big easy’ simply because it is. This very tough, winter-hardy plant is not really a fruit, but is mostly used as such. Rhubarb prefers organically rich soil and sunny, well-drained sites but will grow well in most soils. Once established, the plant is drought-resistant. Do not use any pesticides on or near the plant, which shouldn’t be necessary anyway, since rhubarb doesn’t have too many pests. Give each plant three feet or more and don’t harvest the first year, but always remove flower stalks as soon as they appear. Rhubarb is one of the first crops that can be harvested in the spring.

**Raspberries** are expensive when store-bought, because they are soft and difficult to transport. So growing your own is an excellent idea. There are many great varieties of raspberries to choose from—with red, golden, purple and black fruit. Most produce in July while some produce two crops a year; once in June

and again in the fall. While raspberries are self-fertile it is still a good idea to plant more than one variety to guarantee fertilization (which is necessary for berries). Growing raspberries requires some planning, soil preparation and possibly some simple post and wire supports.

**Strawberries** are another fruit that is excellent for home gardens and probably the most popular summer fruit. As with growing all small fruits, sites with well-drained soils, amended with organic matter, in full sun, are preferred. Strawberries can be grown in rows or in raised “pyramid” planters. Each method has advantages and disadvantages. Read up on what the different varieties have to offer and then decide which ones will be best for you; some are good for freezing, but produce smaller crops or are less hardy than others. All are good for eating!

This is just a quick overview of gardening with small fruits. To get all the information that you will need to make a successful go of it, check out the U of M Extension Service for your county.

[Mnext-ramsey@umn.edu](mailto:Mnext-ramsey@umn.edu) if you live in Hennepin county type in Hennepin instead of Ramsey and likewise with all other metropolitan counties. There is an advantage to using your county’s information because it is tailored for conditions in your immediate area.



## Mother’s Day

March is the month when we try to leave winter behind; in April we almost succeed, but then there is May, glorious May, the month of leaf-spring, planting gardens and celebrating renewed life. What better month to celebrate Mother’s Day?

As pediatricians, the doctors of PYAM recognize the value of mothers each and every day, but most especially on Sunday, May 13. From the entire staff to all you wonderful, loving, hard-working moms, a big Happy Mother’s Day!

## Mother’s Day Rhubarb Custard Tart

### Ingredients

1 cup flour  
1/3 cup powdered sugar  
1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened  
3/4 cup sugar  
3 tablespoons cornstarch  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 cup whipping cream  
2 egg yolks  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1 1/4 pounds rhubarb, cut into 1/2 inch slices (4 cups) or 1(16 ounce) package frozen rhubarb, thawed, drained  
1 tablespoon powdered sugar

### Directions

Place baking sheet on bottom oven rack. Preheat oven to 350 F. In large mixer bowl, beat first 3 ingredients until thoroughly combined. Pat into bottom and 1 1/2 inches up side of 10-inch spring-form pan. In large mixer bowl, stir sugar, cornstarch and salt to combine. Add whipping cream, egg yolks and vanilla, mixing thoroughly; stir in rhubarb. Pour filling into crust; place on preheated baking sheet on bottom oven rack. Bake until filling is set and golden brown (65-75 minutes). Cool on wire rack 30 minutes. Remove side of pan. Sift powdered sugar over top.

**Amount:** 8 servings

### Tips:

Tart may be made ahead and refrigerated until ready to serve. Sift powdered sugar over tart just before serving.

## Savory Meatball Stew

The days might be longer now, but there is still enough of winter's chill in February and March to make this recipe especially welcome on a cold, windy evening. Why meatballs? Economy for one and for another, kids who are fussy about eating chicken or beef will nearly always eat meatballs. Hurrah for healthy hemoglobin! This particular recipe was chosen because it seems to be very versatile. You can make this stew from scratch as listed or substitute store-bought ingredients, like frozen vegetables and ready-made meatballs, or how about vegetarian 'meatballs?' Add spices for an ethnic twang then cook on the stove or in a slow cooker. Serves 6

### Ingredients For meatballs

- 1 lb. any lean ground meat
- 1 onion
- 1 egg
- ½ cup cooked rice, cooked quinoa or bread crumbs
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tsp dried, crumbled oregano
- 2 Tbls oil of your choice

Mix above in food processor (chop onion first if you make the meatballs by hand). Shape into 18-24 uniform meatballs and brown in the oil in frying pan or Dutch oven.

- 2 cups any broth
- 1 onion chopped
- 4 medium carrots cut into 1" pieces
- 4 medium potatoes, cut into 1" pieces
- 1 28 oz. can tomatoes, juice and all
- 1-3 bay leaves
- Salt and pepper or for additional flavor add garlic and some basil

Drain most of fat from Dutch oven and sauté second onion. Then add all remaining ingredients including meatballs. Bring to a boil, cover and reduce heat to maintain simmer until vegetables are tender. (Frozen Veggies usually cook up much faster than fresh). 30-60 minutes.

Or allow meatballs and sautéed onion to cool then add all ingredients to slow cooker. Cook on low for 3-4 hours.

## Ta Dah! Introducing

### CHOP CHOP

If you haven't already discovered copies of CHOP CHOP magazine in our offices, look for them at your next visit.

This fun and informative magazine is designed to get kids into the kitchen, helping and learning to prepare simple to more complicated good-for-you recipes and meals.

How much better than having them yelping about how hungry that are and when is supper going to be ready?

Copies of the magazine are free to our patients.



