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Sisters Laetitia (left) and Alissa Monceau dog sledding at Club Med Pragelato Sestriere in the Italian Alps in 2018. PHOTO: OLIVIER MONCEAU

Family winter holidays

Prepare for dry air, sun exposure

FROM CI

PROTECT YOUR CHILD'S SKIN

Besides clothing, pay attention to skincare. Your kids may not be used to applying face and body moisturiser and lip balm in humid Singapore, but they are necessary in cold climates.

If your children have sensitive or eczema-prone skin, try out the moisturiser before the vacation, says Dr Darryl Lim, a consultant paediatrician from Kinder Clinic at Mount Alvernia Medical Centre.

Ensure that you have packed topical and oral medications to relieve inflammation in case of an eczema flare-up.

Another common mistake is to leave out sunscreen during winter. Dr Epton says: "Sun exposure is a significant concern when you are skiing in the mountains. If the sun is reflecting off snow as well, it is possible you get very sunburnt."

Slather on sunscreen with SPF50 over exposed areas of the face and reapply if you are staying outdoors for a prolonged period of time.

It is also important to tell your children not to pick their nose or blow their nose too vigorously.

This is because the cold, dry weather can trigger nose bleeds, she says. Nasal saline sprays or gels can help moisten the nose passages.

If your child experiences a nose bleed, ask him or her to sit down, leaning forward slightly. Pinch firmly on the soft area of the nose, just below the nasal bone, for five minutes.

You may be tempted to release the pressure to check on the condition before the five minutes are up, but this can cause the bleeding to resume or continue longer, she cautions.

HAVE MEDICATIONS ON STANDBY

Compared with holidaying in cities, it is all the more important to have a well-stocked travel health kit when you go to snowy destinations. Some places can be quite isolated or the pharmacies may close early, says Dr Lim.

Besides prescribed medications that a family member takes regularly, pack remedies for fever, like paracetamol and ibuprofen, and antihistamine, such as Zyrtec and Clarityne, for runny nose or an itchy rash.

Although the cold, dry air can trigger asthma attacks, children with mild and well-controlled asthma should not experience shortness of breath during winter, so you need not be overly worried.

Besides, you should have already been advised by their doctors on what to do if an attack were to occur and have their asthma medications on standby, he reminds.

Children with previous wheezing episodes should have their inhalers with a spacer chamber. Take along a new one, so it does not run out while you are away, as most do not have a dose counter.

If you are packing a nebuliser, check that the machine can handle the voltage of the country you are visiting.

Ice and snow are great for play, but running on these slippery surfaces also means a greater risk for falls and injuries, Dr Lim adds.

Keep an eye on your kids and also help them understand the dangers. Brief them on the dos and don'ts – such as no running outdoors and holding on to handrails on stairs – ahead of the trip.



Mr Olivier Monceau, general manager of Club Med Singapore and Malaysia, with his older daughter Alissa at Club Med Pragelato Sestriere in 2018. PHOTO: OLIVIER MONCEAU