

SEE YOUR DOCTOR

'Tis The Season To Be Safe

(NAPSA)—Winter brings colder temperatures, snow, and the holiday season, making it an ideal time to travel or participate in such activities as skiing, snowboarding or ice-skating. Unfortunately, the pain resulting from injuries can sometimes overshadow the enjoyment of participating in these common activities.

Here are a few tips that may help prevent injury and pain:

- **Skiing/Snowboarding:** The key to preventing injury is proper conditioning, which can be accomplished through aerobic exercise and strength training, as well as stretching. Stretching allows the muscles to work more efficiently, helping to reduce the risk of injury in the event of a fall. Snowboarders also should wear wrist guards made for snowboarding, use the right equipment and wear a helmet, which is particularly important for beginners.

- **Holiday Driving:** “Over the river and through the woods” can spell lower back pain for many drivers. To minimize strain, properly align your seat and elevate the headrest until it is directly behind the back of your head. Good posture also is important—sit straight against the back of the seat; and don’t sit too far back—reaching for the steering wheel or pedals puts strain on the spine. Frequent breaks—stretching and walking every one to two hours can also help reduce back strain.

- **Shoveling Snow:** Shoveling snow can be a real pain in the neck, back, shoulder and wrist. To reduce your risk of injury, shovel early and often (new snow is lighter); push the snow rather than lifting it, but if lifting the snow is necessary, be sure to lift with your legs, bending properly at the knees, with your legs apart and back straight; don’t throw snow over your shoulder or to the side, twisting motions put strain on your back; and pace yourself—take breaks if you’re tired.

- **Ice Skating:** Ice skating and falling go hand in hand. Taking a



Prevent injury and pain so you don't miss out on winter activities.

lesson on how to fall safely and correctly can greatly decrease the risk of injury, including wrist fractures, the most common injury. Being in shape and having the proper equipment also can help to reduce injuries.

Despite your best efforts, injuries can occur, and may lead to persistent pain. But you don't have to miss out on winter activities; there are things you can do to manage your pain.

Speak with your physician for help in determining a pain management program that is appropriate for you. While treatment programs will vary, based on the individual and the type and intensity of the pain, a program that includes both non-drug treatments and medication is recommended. Non-drug treatments may include heat, cold/ice, massage, acupuncture and physical therapy. Stretching and strengthening activities, as well as low-impact exercises, also can help reduce pain. The most common types of pain medications are aspirin, acetaminophen, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and opioids.

For additional information about pain management, consult with your doctor or a pain specialist. Also, the Partners Against Pain Web site, www.partnersagainstpain.com, is a valuable resource for pain management information.