

Winter Safety Tips

Whether winter brings severe storms, light dustings or just cold temperatures, here are some valuable tips on how to keep safe and warm.

What to Wear

- Dress warmly for outdoor activities. Several thin layers will keep you dry and warm. Clothing should consist of thermal long johns, turtlenecks, one or two shirts, pants, sweater, coat, warm socks, boots, gloves or mittens, and a hat.
- The rule of thumb for older babies and young children is to dress them in one more layer of clothing than an adult would wear in the same conditions.

Hypothermia

- Hypothermia develops when your temperature falls below normal due to exposure to cold. It often happens when staying outdoors in extremely cold weather without wearing proper clothing.
- As hypothermia sets in, you may shiver and become lethargic and clumsy. Speech may become slurred and body temperature will decline.
- If you suspect hypothermia, call 911 at once. Until help arrives, go indoors, remove any wet clothing, and wrap in blankets or warm clothes.

Frostbite

- Frostbite happens when the skin and outer tissues become frozen. This

condition tends to happen on extremities like the fingers, toes, ears and nose. They may become pale, gray and blistered. At the same time, the skin burns or become numb.

- If frostbite occurs, go indoors and place the frostbitten parts of the body in warm (not hot) water. 104° Fahrenheit (about the temperature of most hot tubs) is recommended. Warm washcloths may be applied to frostbitten nose, ears and lips.
- Do not rub the frozen areas.
- After a few minutes, dry and cover with clothing or blankets. Get something warm to drink.
- If the numbness continues for more than a few minutes, call your doctor.

Winter Health

- If you suffer from winter nosebleeds, try using a cold air humidifier in the your room at night. Saline nose drops may help keep tissues moist. If bleeding is severe or recurrent, consult your doctor.
- Cold weather does not cause colds or flu. But the viruses that cause colds and flu tend to be more common in the winter. Frequent hand washing and sneezing or coughing into the bend of your elbow may help reduce the spread of colds and flu.
- The influenza vaccine may reduce the risk of catching the flu.

Winter Sports and Activities

Set reasonable time limits on outdoor play to prevent frostbite. Come inside periodically to warm up.

Ice Skating

- Skate only on approved surfaces. Check for signs posted by local police or recreation departments, or call your local police department to find out which areas have been approved.

Sledding

- Keep sledders away from motor vehicles.
- Children should be supervised while sledding. Keep young children separated from older children. Consider having your child wear a helmet while sledding.
- Sledding feet first or sitting up, instead of lying down head-first, may prevent head injuries.
- Use steerable sleds, not snow disks or inner tubes.
- Sleds should be structurally sound and free of sharp edges and splinters, and the steering mechanism should be well lubricated.
- Sled slopes should be free of obstructions like trees or fences, be covered in snow not ice, not be too steep (slope of less than 30°), and end with a flat runoff.
- Avoid sledding in crowded areas.

Snow Skiing and Snowboarding

- Never ski or snowboard alone.
- Young children should always be supervised by an adult. Older children's need for adult supervision depends on their maturity and skill. If older children

are not with an adult, they should always at least be accompanied by a friend. The AAP recommends that children under age 7 not snowboard.

- Consider wearing a helmet.
- Equipment should fit. Skiers should wear safety bindings that are adjusted at least every year. Snowboarders should wear gloves with built-in wrist guards.
- Slopes should fit the ability and experience of the skier or snowboarder. Avoid crowded slopes.
- Avoid skiing in areas with trees and other obstacles.



Snowmobiling

- Do not use a snowmobile to pull a sled or skiers.
- Wear goggles and a safety helmet approved for use on motorized vehicles like motorcycles.
- Travel at safe speeds.
- Never use alcohol or other drugs before or during snowmobiling.
- Never snowmobile alone or at night.
- Stay on marked trails, away from roads, water, railroads and pedestrians.
- The AAP recommends that children under age 16 not operate snowmobiles and that children under age 6 never ride on snowmobiles.

Sun Protection

The sun's rays can still cause sunburn in the winter, especially when they reflect off snow. Make sure to cover your exposed skin with sunscreen.

Fire Protection

Winter is a time when household fires occur. It is a good time to remember to:

- Buy and install smoke alarms on every floor of your home
- Test smoke alarms monthly
- Practice fire drills with your children

