



# COLD WEATHER DANGERS

Too much exposure to the cold - or exposure to “too much” cold - can be hazardous to your health.

\* **HYPOTHERMIA** is a dangerous lowering of a person’s body temperature. Violent shivering is an early warning sign as the body tries to warm itself. Although the shivering will stop as the body temperature continues to drop, watch for drowsiness, confusion or altered speech. Seek medical attention immediately. While waiting, keep the person warm and dry, and slowly give warm liquids to drink if conscious.

\* **FROSTBITE** is tissue injury due to freezing. Gently re-warm the affected area with warm water. **DO NOT** rub the affected area or use dry heat from a heat lamp.

\* **OVEREXERTION** - the combination of cold weather and exhaustion from shoveling, pushing a car, or walking in deep snow can strain the heart and trigger a heart attack in people already at risk. Check with your doctor before doing any strenuous exercise, especially if you are sedentary.

\* Anyone - but often a child - who touches a very cold surface with their lips, tongue or hands can become stuck to it. **DO NOT** separate the person’s skin or tongue from the surface by force. Pour warm (not hot) water or apply a warm, damp cloth until the body part comes away freely.



Protect yourself - and your family - from cold related illnesses:

\* **STAY DRY.** Wet clothing loses its ability to insulate. Keep spare clothing, socks and mittens ready for a “quick switch”.

\* **LAYER CLOTHING.** Wear a turtleneck under a sweater, glove liners inside of mittens, and double socks to maintain body heat. Don’t forget your hat and scarf!



\* The **ELDERLY** are at especially high risk for cold related illnesses. If you routinely look in on an elderly or disabled person, check on them more frequently during cold spells. If you are an older adult, ask a friend or family member to visit or give you a call every day.



\* Set a **TIME LIMIT** for outdoor play. Have children check in after an hour outside. Make sure clothing, mittens and socks are still dry. When in doubt, bring them inside for a snack.

\* Keep **SNOWBALLS** free of ice chunks, rocks, sticks or other debris. A tightly packed “iceball” in the hands of a strong pitcher can be a dangerous weapon.

\* **DO NOT** use a kerosene heater, BBQ, or any outdoor type heater inside. Properly ventilate to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning when you use your fireplace or wood stove.