

Winning over Winter Weather: Preventative Steps to Prepare and Keep Yourself Healthy all Season Long

I love when the temperature starts to drop. For me it means pumpkin spice everything, football, and my favorite sweatshirt. However, if you live in a cold weather region, then you may not share my same enthusiasm. That said, no matter where you call home, “Old Man Winter” may stop in for an unexpected visit and it is time to get prepared.

Stay Warm and Look Cool

In cold temperatures, your body loses heat faster than it can be produced, which can lead to serious health problems. It is important to wear several layers of loose clothing, which provides better insulation in colder climates. Layers should include:

- A base layer is the layer closest to your skin and should act as a constant ‘second skin’ throughout your day. Base layers provide a layer of warmth while absorbing and evaporating your sweat to keep you feeling warm and comfortable.
- An insulating layer, such as a fleece pullover or jacket, will trap the heat and keep you warm.
- An outer shell layer protects you from the elements such as wind, rain, and snow.



Avoid Hypothermia

Prolonged exposure to the cold eventually uses up your body's stored energy, which can lead to a serious medical condition called hypothermia. Signs and symptoms of hypothermia may include shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech, and drowsiness. If you suspect someone is suffering from hypothermia, it is important to call 9-1-1 and move the victim to a warm/dry area, remove any wet clothing, and place warm bottles in the armpits, beside the chest, and groin.

How the Frost Bites

Frostbite is an injury that causes a loss of feeling and color in the affected areas. It most often affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes. By wearing proper clothing such as a hat, mask that covers the face and mouth, gloves, and water-resistant footwear, you can decrease your chances of getting frostbite. If you suspect that you may have frostbite:

- Remove the wet clothing and replace with dry clothes, taking extra care not to rub the affected area.
- Do not try to rewarm the area before getting medical help.
- Loosely cover and protect the area from further contact or exposure to the elements.

Before “Old Man Winter” visits your town, take a few simple, preventative steps to keep yourself healthy all season long.

