Prescriptions for Prevention

Cold Weather Safety

Did you know?

Extreme cold weather events can be dangerous. Learn how to keep your family safe in cold weather.

Action Plan

- Never use a gas stove, oven, or gas space heater as a heating source in your home.
- Install a carbon monoxide (CO) detector on every level where there is a fuel-burning appliance and also on every level where people sleep.
- **Keep children warm and dry** by dressing them in:
  - One more layer than an adult would wear
  - A hat that covers the ears, water-resistant coat and mittens
  - 1-2 pairs of thick socks and waterproof boots

Determine wind chill and the risk of frostbite using the chart linked here:

- **Consider wind chill**, which is how cold the air feels on your skin. Wind chill can make non-freezing temperatures a risk for frostbite.
  - If wind chill is below freezing (<32˚F), cover cheeks and fingers. Also, take indoor breaks at least every 20-30 minutes.
  - Stay indoors if wind chill is below -15˚F.
- **Know the signs of frostbite:** When skin turns from red and cold to pale and grayish risk increases for frostbite. A burning sensation, numbness, or a loss of feeling are also concerning signs. Prevent frostbite by keeping skin covered and dry.
  - If you suspect mild frostbite and the skin is intact, move indoors and put skin under warm (not hot) water or a washcloth.
  - If skin is pale, gray, or blistered, call 911 or go to the emergency department.
- **Know the signs of hypothermia:** Hypothermia is a dangerous drop in body temperature. Move indoors and call 911 if you observe:
  - Shallow breathing, confusion and lack of coordination
  - Shivering (may stop if hypothermia becomes severe)
  - Drowsiness and slurred speech

Perelman School of Medicine University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia Regional Center for Children's Environmental Health
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Resources

LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program)

Provides financial assistance for heating bills and emergencies during the winter. LIHEAP offers resources for households to avoid shutoffs or get fuel refills. To learn how you can stay safe from cold weather emergenicies, click **this link** or scan the QR code:

PA Department of Health – Extreme Cold Preparedness

The Pennsylvania Department of Health provides a series of tips on how to stay informed and prepare for cold weather. Refer to the website's chart on how to evaluate the degree to which you are at risk of hypothermia or frostbite risk based on air temperature and wind chill conditions. Click **this link** or scan the QR code:

PA Utility Shut-Off Protections (PUC Winter Moratorium)

Click **this link** or scan the QR code to learn the winter rules governing utility shutoffs for vulnerable households and how to request protection.

For more information on the resources here or other questions, contact the Philadelphia Regional Center for Children's Environmental Health at:
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Website: prcceh.upenn.edu

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