

* COLD WEATHER SAFETY

Winter Health Risks:

Protect Yourself from Cold Weather

As winter sets in, the cold air brings more than just a chill – it can also pose serious health risks. From winter illnesses to the dangers of extreme temperatures, it's crucial to take steps to protect your health. Check out these essential tips to stay healthy and safe this season!

Keep Your Immune System Strong

Cold weather can weaken your immune system, making you more susceptible to illness.

Here's how to give your body the best chance to fight off infections:

Boost your nutrition

Eat a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Foods high in vitamin C (like oranges and peppers) and zinc (like nuts and seeds) are great for strengthening your immune system.

Stay hydrated

Even in cold weather, it's important to drink plenty of water. Dehydration can still occur in winter due to indoor heating and dry air.

Get enough sleep

Quality sleep is essential for a strong immune system. Aim for 7-9 hours per night to help your body recover and function optimally.

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Prevent Seasonal Illnesses

Winter months often bring an increase in colds, the flu, and other respiratory illnesses. Here's how you can avoid getting sick:

Get vaccinated

If you haven't already, get your flu shot and stay up to date on any other recommended vaccines. Flu season peaks in winter, and vaccination is your best defense.

Wash hands frequently

Germs spread quickly during the winter months, especially when people gather indoors. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds to reduce the spread of bacteria and viruses.

Avoid close contact with sick individuals

If you know someone who is sick, limit your exposure to prevent catching their illness.

Protect Against Hypothermia and Frostbite

Exposure to cold temperatures can lead to serious health conditions like hypothermia and frostbite. It's crucial to stay warm and recognize the early signs of these conditions:

Dress in layers

Wear several layers of clothing, including thermal undergarments, a warm sweater, and a windproof jacket. Don't forget to wear gloves, scarves, and a hat to protect your extremities.

Limit outdoor exposure

If possible, avoid spending long periods outside when the temperature drops below freezing.

Know the symptoms

Hypothermia can cause confusion, dizziness, and uncontrollable shivering, while frostbite typically affects fingers, toes, and ears, causing numbness and pale skin. If you notice these signs, seek medical help immediately.

Stay Active and Keep Moving

Physical activity is key to staying healthy during the winter months, even if it's cold outside. Here's how to stay active in colder weather:

Exercise indoors

Try activities like yoga, Pilates, or home workouts to stay active in the warmth of your home.

Bundle up for outdoor exercise

If you enjoy outdoor activities, such as walking or running, dress in layers to stay warm, and remember to warm up before heading outside.

Stretch regularly

Cold weather can make your muscles stiffer, so be sure to stretch before and after any physical activity to avoid injuries.

Take Care of Your Mental Health

The winter months can bring about seasonal affective disorder (SAD) and feelings of isolation. Taking care of your mental health is just as important as your physical health:

Get natural sunlight

Sunlight helps regulate your body's internal clock and boosts your mood. If you can, spend time outside during daylight hours, even if it's just for a short walk.

Stay connected

The winter can feel isolating, especially when the weather keeps us indoors. Make time to connect with friends and family through calls, video chats, or socially-distanced gatherings.

Prioritize self-care

Take time for activities that help you relax and recharge, whether it's reading, meditating, or engaging in a creative hobby.

Keep Your Home Safe and Comfortable

Cold weather can affect your health indoors as well. Here's how to ensure your home supports your well-being during the winter:

Maintain proper humidity

Use a humidifier to keep air moisture levels at a comfortable level. Dry air can irritate your respiratory system and skin.

Check for drafts

Seal any gaps around windows and doors to prevent cold air from entering and making your home too chilly.

Stay warm without overdoing it

Set your thermostat to a comfortable temperature to avoid overheating or getting too cold indoors.

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