

Health & Safety Tip #54

Health Tips for Winter

Cold weather can be hard on our health. Extremely cold temperatures affect everyone, particularly when it's windy. Some of us are at greater risk:

- Children
- Seniors (especially those living alone)
- People who are homeless
- Outdoor workers
- People with circulatory problems
- People taking certain prescription medications

Exposure to extreme cold can result in frostnip, frostbite, or hypothermia. Frostnip and frostbite are the freezing of tissues, hypothermia is when body temperature drops below 35 degrees celcius - which can be fatal. To stay safe this winter:

- Be careful of ice and snow, slips can result in falls and broken bones.
- Cold temperatures put increased stress on the heart. Those with heart conditions should be careful about exertion during activities like snow shoveling.
- Eat well and get enough rest.
- Wear layers of warm clothing (sweaters, thick socks, insulated coats/boots, mittens, hats, and neck warmers).
- Change wet clothing or footwear immediately and remove outer layers of clothing if you are sweating.
- Stay out of the wind and reduce time outdoors when it is extremely cold.
- Tobacco, alcohol and certain medications increase your susceptibility to cold.
- Drink non-alcoholic beverages such as warm water, soup or tea.
- Physical activity increases your metabolism and generates heat.
- Check children's faces and extremities (fingers, toes, ears and noses) for numbness or pale skin, which are signs of frostnip and frostbite.
- Watch for confusion, slurred speech, shivering, and clumsiness as these can indicate hypothermia.
- If you are going to be driving, get important safety and route information before you head out at [DriveBC](#).

