

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.

* 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 to the surface until the body part comes away freely.

Protect your family from cold related illnesses:

* **STAY DRY.** Wet clothing loses its ability to insulate. Keep spare clothing, mittens and socks 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.

* 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 everyone inside for a snack.

* 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 at least twice a day during cold spells.



* **SAFETY NOTE:** 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.

DANGER

CARBON MONOXIDE

CARBON MONOXIDE is colorless, odorless, tasteless ... and it can literally take your breath away. Carbon monoxide is produced whenever a fuel - gas, oil, kerosene, wood or charcoal - is burned incompletely.

Health effects occur when carbon monoxide enters the body through the lungs and attaches to the red blood cells that usually carry oxygen throughout the body. Early symptoms can appear at low levels of carbon monoxide exposure, and often mimic the flu or food poisoning. Symptoms include fatigue, headache, dizziness, nausea and vomiting. The effects of exposure to higher levels of carbon monoxide are more serious, and include brain damage and loss of consciousness. At high enough concentrations, it can kill you in a matter of minutes. Reduce your risk of carbon monoxide poisoning:

- ❖ Have a professional inspect heating systems and home furnaces before each heating season, clean chimneys and fireplace flues periodically, and install all new or replacement appliances.
- ❖ Install a carbon monoxide detector that meets the Underwriters Laboratory standard (UL 2034). Install it near the sleeping area - a second detector near the home's heating source adds an extra measure of safety. Purchase a detector that has a test button and has battery power, which provides continuous protection and doesn't require recalibration if there is a power outage. *If your detector goes off ... get out of the house at once!*
- ❖ If you suspect you are being exposed to carbon monoxide, get fresh air immediately. Open windows and doors for more ventilation, turn off any combustible appliances and leave the house. Contact your doctor for a proper diagnosis and treatment.