

## Cold Weather Tips for Seniors from Southwest District Health

Advance planning is your best defense against weather-related health problems. Let's make wintertime safer and healthier.

- ☼ Make sure you have your annual flu shot and take a pneumonia and a shingles vaccination, if recommended by your medical provider.
- ☼ Wash your hands often to keep from getting ill.
- ☼ Eat right and avoid high-carb foods. Try stews and soups with lots of vegetables and reduced-sodium broths to keep you toasty.
- ☼ Prepare Winter Survival Kits for your home and your vehicle. (Supply Kit contents are listed in the links below.)
- ☼ Prepare your vehicle as well as your home. Make sure you keep your gas tank at least half full.
- ☼ Always tell someone where you are going and the route you are taking.
- ☼ If you must be outside, stay dry and keep warm by wearing several layers of loose clothing. Cover all exposed skin. As we age, the body is less able to respond to long exposure to extreme temperatures and you may develop hypothermia. Even mild cold may cause hypothermia in seniors.
- ☼ Stay active, but avoid over-exertion. Don't risk a heart attack or injury by shoveling snow or pushing your car. Check with your doctor about strenuous exercise. Persons with cardiac conditions or asthma may not be able to tolerate as much exercise in cold weather.
- ☼ Limit alcohol, caffeine, and cigarette smoking. These decrease the body's ability to conserve heat.
- ☼ Avoid carrying heavy packages while walking on ice or snow. Also, move slowly and wear non-slip shoes. Tennis shoes or rubber boots are safer than leather-soled shoes.

Refer to valuable guides the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has provided for you:

- Extreme Cold : A Prevention Guide to Promote Your Personal Health and Safety, [www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/guide.asp](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/guide.asp).
- Winter Weather Checklists, [www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/beforestorm/supplylists.asp](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/beforestorm/supplylists.asp).
- Be Ready! Winter Weather Infographic, [www.cdc.gov/phpr/infographics.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/infographics.htm) .