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Oh, the Weather Outside is Frightful...

It seems like only yesterday we were walking around in short sleeves and sandals, yet here we are at the start of what threatens to be a long winter. The cold, ice and snow pose unique wellness challenges and boost activity at the ER – but by being proactive, you can safely weather the storm (literally)!

Perhaps the most important tip for braving the chill is to **dress properly**. Wearing layered clothing works better than a single heavy coat. Add mittens and a hat to prevent loss of body heat, and insulated, waterproof boots to keep your feet warm and steady your footing. And cover your mouth with a scarf or knit mask to protect your lungs.

Once you're ready to face the elements, remember that cold weather puts an extra strain on the heart – even more so if you have high blood pressure. So whether you're outside for work or play, pace yourself and pay attention to any sign that your body needs to warm up a bit.

Prolonged exposure to cold can lead to hypothermia or frostbite. If you have symptoms of hypothermia (confusion, dizziness, exhaustion or severe shivering) or frostbite (numbness, skin discoloration or waxy feeling skin), seek medical attention immediately. Put another way: Enjoy walking in the winter wonderland, but be careful out there!



Cool Tips for Cold Temperatures

With planning and a bit of caution, you'll make it to the spring thaw safe and sound!

- If you plan to be outside for a while, let someone know.
- Excess perspiration will increase heat loss, so remove extra layers of clothing whenever you feel too warm.
- Walk carefully on snowy, icy sidewalks.
- Don't use cold weather as an excuse not to exercise – but dress appropriately and wear sunscreen (or move your workout inside).
- When shoveling snow, take frequent breaks and stay hydrated. Avoid overexertion.
- High winds can lower temperatures to dangerous levels. Better to stay indoors and enjoy a warm beverage!



SOURCES: Red Cross, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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1975 Tamarack Rd. • Newark, OH 43055 • (800) 423-3151 • www.medben.com