

WINTER WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

WEST WINDSOR HEALTH DEPARTMENT

serving the communities of West Windsor ■ Robbinsville ■ Hightstown

Too much exposure to the cold - or exposure to "too much" cold - can be hazardous to your health.

- **FROSTBITE** occurs when tissue freezes, appearing hard, pale and cold. It may throb, ache or feel like pins and needles, followed by numbness. Gently re-warm the area with warm water. **DO NOT** rub the affected area or use dry heat from a heat lamp.
- **OVEREXERTION** - the combination of cold weather and exhaustion from shoveling, scraping or walking in deep snow can strain the heart and trigger a heart attack in people already at risk. Always check with your doctor before doing any strenuous exercise.
- Anyone - but often a child - who touches a very cold surface with their tongue, lips or hands can become stuck to it. **DO NOT** separate the person's skin or tongue from the surface by force. Pour warm water or apply a warm, damp cloth until the body part comes away freely.
- **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 body temperature continues to drop, watch for drowsiness, confusion or altered speech. Seek medical attention immediately. Keep the person warm and dry, and slowly give warm liquids to drink if conscious.

Protect yourself - and your family - from the cold:

- **STAY DRY.** Wet clothing loses its ability to insulate. Keep spare clothing, socks and mittens 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. Remember your hat and scarf!
- 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 more frequently during cold spells. If you are an older adult, ask a friend or family member to visit or give you a call every day.
- Set a **TIME LIMIT** for outdoor play. Check on children after an hour outside. Make sure clothing, mittens and socks are still dry. When in doubt, call them inside for a snack.
- Keep **SNOWBALLS** free of ice chunks, rocks, sticks or other debris. A tightly packed "iceball" in the hands of a strong pitcher can become a dangerous weapon.
- **DO NOT** use a kerosene heater, BBQ, or any outdoor heater inside. Properly ventilate to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning when you use your fireplace or wood stove.



CARBON MONOXIDE is produced whenever a fuel - gas, oil, kerosene, wood or charcoal - is burned incompletely. It is a **SILENT KILLER** - colorless, odorless and tasteless. At high enough concentrations, it can kill you in a matter of minutes. Reduce your risk of CO poisoning:

- Have a professional inspect heating systems and home furnaces before each heating season, and clean chimneys and fireplace flues periodically.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector that meets the Underwriters Laboratory standard (UL 2034). *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.

HEALTHY HOLIDAY GIFTS



EDIBLE GIFTS

- Fill a salad bowl with a paring knife, veggie or citrus peeler, tongs and a variety of exotic vegetables.
- Introduce an aspiring chef to low fat cooking with a vegetable steamer basket, non-stick skillet or wok and a cookbook.
- Invited to a holiday party? Bring a fruit or nut basket as a healthy alternative to the traditional box of chocolates or cookies.
- Fill an ornamental bottle or jar with homemade biscotti, dried fruit & nut mix, or the ingredients for rice pilaf or chili. Don't forget to include a recipe card for the goodies when this batch has been eaten!



FITNESS GIFTS

- Introduce a new skill by pairing a yoga mat, stability ball or exercise bands with an instructional DVD.
- Get your kids to exercise more by balancing sedentary electronic games with interactive programs like the Wii PlayStation.
- Many fitness centers offer a two-for-one trial membership: join with a friend and you can both start the New Year on the right foot.
- Build a fitness basket - combine a colorful sun visor, comfortable socks, reusable water bottle and sunscreen with a pedometer.



GIFT CERTIFICATES

- Slip a notice of subscription into an introductory issue of a cooking, fitness, or wellness magazine that you enjoy ... and want to share.
- Many spas and massage centers have seasonal specials. Add a certificate to an aromatherapy candle and a CD of soothing music.



GIFTS FROM THE HEART

- Design a coupon book for weekly walks. You get the bonus of quality time with a friend or family member and they get the gift of establishing a consistent exercise routine.
- Sometimes the best gift is time. Offer coupons for baby-sitting, dog walking, or a week's worth of healthy dinner preparation.



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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Our vision is thriving and healthy communities. To achieve our vision, the Health Department is committed to providing public health services to protect, promote, assess and assure the health and safety of our residents.

HOLIDAY WELLNESS TIPS

In the hustle and bustle of holiday celebrations with family and friends, it is easy to ignore the importance of staying healthy! Stay focused during this holiday season:

STAY QUIT OVER THE HOLIDAYS!

- Stay away from alcohol. Not only does alcohol inhibit willpower, it's also a powerful "trigger" to light up while you're drinking. If you are feeling vulnerable, avoid parties where you know there will be a lot of smokers.
- Ask for help! Visit the QUITNET website at www.njquitnet.com or call the toll free hotline at (866) NJSTOPS for support.



WATCH YOUR WEIGHT!

- Only eat what you *really* like. Give yourself permission to eat your favorite holiday foods ... but in moderation. Unless you are sure there will be healthy choices at a gathering, offer to bring a fruit platter or vegetables with low fat dip.
- Have a low calorie snack (yogurt, broth or salad) before you go to a party or holiday celebration to curb your appetite. Listen to your body for fullness since overeating can ruin the experience of a wonderful meal.

REMEMBER TO EXERCISE!

- Shop 'til you drop! Park your car at the far end of the parking lot, walk up the stairs (or escalator) instead of using the elevator and take one last stroll around the perimeter of the mall before you go home.
- Don't let the holidays interrupt your fitness routine. Even little "nuggets" of exercise (three, 10 minute walks throughout the day) will accumulate to help maintain your fitness, prevent holiday weight gain and reduce stress.

DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!

- If you are a host, allow guests to pace themselves. Offer nonalcoholic drinks such as fruit punch, a "Virgin" Mary or flavored sparkling water.
- If you are a guest, set a limit for yourself or designate a non-drinking driver who will be responsible at the end of the evening.
- Exercise, fresh air, black coffee or a cold shower will not make you sober. You may feel more alert, but only time will make you a sober, safe driver.

You are *not* Superman (or Superwoman)! Set limits in terms of gift buying, decorating, cooking, entertaining and traveling. You simply cannot do everything or be everywhere at once.

Set realistic goals and expectations. Often our desire for the way things "should" be and what you "must" do make it virtually impossible to enjoy the holiday season.

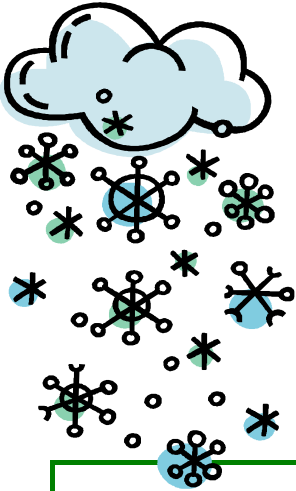


HOLIDAY STRESS TIPS

- Stretch your neck, shoulder and back several times a day
- Try to spend 15 minutes outside in the sun every day
- Share your feelings with someone you trust - avoid people that are chronically angry or cranky
- Listen to music
- Take a nap
- Sit quietly without any noise for 10 minutes and daydream
- Breathe deeply and slowly
- Take a hot bath or shower
- Rent a funny movie or one with a happy ending

10 Tips to ... TRAVEL SMART

Seventy percent of all winter deaths happen in cars ... so **TRAVEL SMART!** (National Weather Service)



- 1 GET YOUR CAR A“CHECK-UP”** before the weather gets ugly. Make sure your battery is fully charged, all the lights are working and there is sufficient antifreeze in the heating/cooling system. Check that your tires are in good shape and your brakes are working well.
- 2 MAKE SURE YOUR WIPERS WORK.** Replace worn blades that streak the windshield. Keep the washer reservoir bottle filled with antifreeze solvent.
- 3 PAY ATTENTION TO WEATHER REPORTS.** Don't travel if there's a winter storm warning. If you must travel, tell someone your destination, route and when you expect to arrive.

4 KEEP AN EMERGENCY KIT IN YOUR CAR that includes:

- ✓ Large flashlight and extra batteries
- ✓ Bottled water and nonperishable foods such as granola bars, peanut butter crackers, dried fruit and trail mix
- ✓ Small fire extinguisher
- ✓ Shovel, basic tools, flares, jumper cables, extra fluids, bulbs, etc
- ✓ Ice scraper/snow brush
- ✓ Sleeping bag or blanket
- ✓ First aid kit and manual
- ✓ Tire repair kit and pump
- ✓ Cat litter or sand for tire traction

- 5 BE PREPARED** for poor road conditions. Watch for ice patches hidden by shadows or overpasses. Slippery roads require longer stopping distances so keep extra space between your car and the car in front of you.
- 6 BE A SAFE DRIVER.** Avoid driving while fatigued, after drinking alcohol or taking cold medications. Wear sunglasses for snow and sunshine glare. Switch your lights to low beams when there's a snowstorm at night. Use your seatbelt every time you get in the car!
- 7 IF YOUR CAR GETS STUCK IN THE SNOW** and you keep the engine and heater running, open a window slightly and clear snow away from the exhaust pipe to vent carbon monoxide. Never warm up a vehicle in an enclosed area, such as a garage.
- 8 STOP SAFELY.** Squeeze the brake pedal down until you feel the brakes are about to lock - let up and squeeze again. If you begin to skid, keep your foot OFF the gas and OFF the brake.
- 9 FILL'ER UP!** Keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid gas line freeze-up and to avoid running out of gas in a traffic jam.
- 10 MAXIMIZE VISIBILITY.** Clean snow off the *entire* car - hood, roof, trunk, lights and windows. Turn on the heater for a few minutes before using the defroster to prevent moisture from fogging the windshield.

