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## Staying warm in cold weather

Before you or your children step out into cold air, remember the advice that follows with the simple acronym COLD — cover, overexertion, layers, dry:

- **Cover.** Wear a hat or other protective covering to prevent body heat from escaping from your head, face and neck. Cover your hands with mittens instead of gloves. Mittens are more effective than gloves because mittens keep your fingers in closer contact with one another.
- **Overexertion.** Avoid activities that would cause you to sweat a lot. The combination of wet clothing and cold weather can cause you to lose body heat more quickly.
- **Layers.** Wear loosefitting, layered, lightweight clothing. Outer clothing made of tightly woven, water-repellent material is best for wind protection. Wool, silk or polypropylene inner layers hold body heat better than cotton does.
- **Dry.** Stay as dry as possible. Get out of wet clothing as soon as possible. Be especially careful to keep your hands and feet dry, as it's easy for snow to get into mittens and boots.

### **Keeping children safe outdoors**

The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests the following tips to help prevent hypothermia when children are outside in the winter:

- Dress infants and young children in one more layer than an adult would wear in the same conditions.
- Limit the amount of time children spend outside in the cold.
- Have children come inside frequently to warm themselves.

### **Winter car safety**

Whenever you're traveling during bad weather, be sure someone knows where you're headed, and at

what time you're expected to arrive. That way, if you get into trouble on your way, emergency responders will know where to look for your car. It's also a good idea to keep emergency supplies in your car in case you get stranded. Supplies may include several blankets, matches, candles, a first-aid kit, dry or canned food, and a can opener. Travel with a cellphone if possible. If you're stranded, put everything you need in the car with you, huddle together and stay covered. Run the car for 10 minutes each hour to warm it up. Make sure a window is slightly open and the exhaust pipe isn't covered with snow while the engine is running.

### **Drinking alcohol**

Take the following precautions to avoid alcohol-related risks of hypothermia.

Don't drink alcohol:

- If you're going to be outside in cold weather
- If you're boating
- Before going to bed on cold nights

### **Cold-water safety**

Water doesn't have to be extremely cold to cause hypothermia. Any water that's colder than normal body temperature causes heat loss. The following tips may increase your survival time in cold water, if you accidentally fall in:

- Wear a life jacket. If you plan to ride in a watercraft, wear a life jacket. A life jacket can help you stay alive longer in cold water by enabling you to float without using energy and by providing some insulation.
- Keep a whistle attached to your life jacket to signal for help.
- Get out of the water if possible. Get out of the water as much as possible, such as climbing onto a capsized boat or grabbing onto a floating object.
- Don't attempt to swim unless you're close to safety. Unless a boat, another person or a life jacket is close by, stay put. Swimming will use up energy and may shorten survival time.
- Position your body to minimize heat loss. Use a body position known as the heat escape lessening position (HELP) to reduce heat loss while you wait for assistance. Hold your knees to your chest to protect the trunk of your body. If you're wearing a life jacket that turns your face down in this position, bring your legs tightly together, your arms to your sides and your head

back.

- Huddle with others. If you've fallen into cold water with other people, keep warm by facing each other in a tight circle.
- Don't remove your clothing. While you're in the water, don't remove clothing. Buckle, button and zip up your clothes. Cover your head if possible. The layer of water between your clothing and your body will help insulate you. Remove clothing only after you're safely out of the water and can take measures to get dry and warm.