



Promoting and Protecting Public Health

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Health Department Offers Cold Weather

Recommendations

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Staying safe and warm can be a challenge as temperatures drop below freezing, but failing to take the proper steps can be dangerous, according to Douglas County Health Director Adi Pour.

“Nebraska offers an extreme range of weather conditions and people need to be ready for those changes,” Dr. Pour said. “Since the forecast calls for several days with some sub-zero temperatures, it’s important to remember cold weather can be even more dangerous than hot weather.”

Indoor or outdoor exposure to cold temperatures can cause life-threatening health problems. Anyone can be affected, but the greatest danger is to the elderly and to infants.

Dressing appropriately for the weather will help protect you. It’s best to wear several layers of loose, bulky clothing. That provides better insulation and lets you remove some items if you become overheated.

Other ideas to help get through the cold snap:

- Avoid tight clothing because it reduces blood circulation.
- The ears, face, hands and feet need to be protected in extremely cold weather.
- Wear a hat to prevent losing heat from the head. It also holds in warmth for the rest of your body.
- Buy insulated socks or wear two pairs of socks and use water-proof boots to help protect your feet.
- People also should check on neighbors, especially those who may be shoveling snow and those who don’t leave their home regularly.

Just as you should follow rules for working outdoors in hot weather, there are rules to follow when you must be outside in the cold. Outdoor time should be limited on extremely cold days, and people need to keep as warm as possible. Anyone working outside should periodically move to a warm location and carry cold weather survival gear. That includes a thermos of a hot liquid, a change of clothes, a jacket and blankets.

“Another concern is that cold temperatures often arrive with a winter storm,” Dr. Pour said. “That means you and your family may have to cope with power failures and icy roads in addition to the cold.”

Staying indoors will reduce some risks, but never use portable heating devices that use combustible fuels indoors. These may include lanterns, cook stoves, grills and other items. They cause odorless carbon monoxide gas that can result in illness or death.

The best way to stay safe is to know how to prevent cold-related health problems and what to do if a cold-weather health emergency arises.

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