



Cold Weather Safety

Cold weather during the holidays many families will head to the mountains and snow. Students should be learning to care for themselves by dressing appropriately for cold weather. While people do not catch a cold from being in the cold, it can affect their health.

Children, due to smaller body size, lose heat more quickly than adults. If it is cold outside they should dress in layers. If they are out in cold, wet weather they should have:

- An inner layer, such as long underwear, both tops and bottoms, and sock liners.
- A middle layer, such as fleece leggings and top for added warmth, wool or fleece socks should also be worn.
- An outer layer that is water proof such as:
 - Parka
 - Snow or rain pants
 - Waterproof boots
 - Insulated gloves

Hypothermia and frostbite are injuries that occur due to cold weather. While these happen most often at extremely cold temperature, they can happen at above freezing temperature if the person affected is wet or the wind is blowing. Wearing clothing that is tightly woven so that it blocks out wind is important.

The symptoms of hypothermia are:

- **Shivering, exhaustion**
- **Confusion, loss of coordination**
- **Memory loss, slurred speech**
- **Drowsiness**

If you or someone with you is affected do the following:

- If their temperature is below 95 degrees, get emergency help.
- If above 95 degrees, get them to a warm place.
 - Get wet clothing off.
 - Warm them in a sleeping bag or blanket, use skin to skin contact if needed for warmth.
 - Warm, non-alcoholic beverages can be given to conscious people.
 - Make sure the head is covered to keep warmth in.
 - Get medical care as soon as possible.

Frostbite can also be a concern. It usually affects fingers, toes, noses, and ears. Signs of frostbite are:

- White or grayish-yellow skin color
- Skin that feels unusually firm or waxy.
- Numbness

To treat frostbite, do the following:

- Get the person to immediate medical care
- If immediate medical care is not available,
 - Get to a warm room. Do not walk if feet are affected.
 - Immerse affected area in warm, not hot water.
 - Do not rub area or use a heating pad.
 - Get medical care as soon as possible.

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