



News from the Office of
ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ

NEWS RELEASE

Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein

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How to Care for Yourself or Another in Extreme Cold

Follow These Guidelines to Bundle Up and Stay Warm!

ERIE COUNTY, NY— The Erie County Department of Health (“ECDOH”) reminds everyone that extremely cold temperatures are expected this week. “When winter temperatures drop significantly below normal, staying warm and safe can become a challenge” **said Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein**. “Exposure to cold temperatures, whether indoors or outside, can cause other serious or life-threatening health problems. Infants and the elderly are particularly at risk, but anyone can be affected. To keep yourself and your family safe, you should know how to prevent cold weather-related health problems.”

- Whenever temperatures drop decidedly below normal and as wind speed increases, heat can leave your body more rapidly. So, when the weather is extremely cold, and especially if there are high winds, try to stay indoors. Make any trips outside as brief as possible, and remember these tips to protect your health and safety: Be sure the outer layer of your clothing is tightly woven, preferably wind resistant, to reduce body-heat loss caused by wind. Wool, silk, or polypropylene inner layers of clothing will hold more body heat than cotton.
- Stay dry; wet clothing chills the body rapidly. Excess perspiration will increase heat loss, so remove extra layers of clothing whenever you feel too warm.
- Do not ignore shivering. It’s an important first sign that the body is losing heat. Persistent shivering is a signal to return indoors.

Cold weather puts an extra strain on the heart. If you have heart disease or high blood pressure, follow your doctor’s advice about shoveling snow or performing other hard work in the cold. Otherwise, if you have to do heavy outdoor chores dress warmly and work slowly. Remember, your body is already working hard just to stay warm, so don’t overdo it.

Walking on ice is extremely dangerous. Many cold-weather injuries result from falls on ice-covered sidewalks, steps, driveways, and porches. Keep your steps and walkways as free of ice as possible by using rock salt or another chemical de-icing compound.

By observing these safety precautions, you can reduce the risk of cold weather related health problems.

For more Information contact:

Erie County Department of Health

<http://www.erie.gov/health>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/guide.asp>