



Surviving the deep freeze

Five tips for keeping kids safe in winter

1. Know the signs

It's much easier to prevent frostbite and hypothermia than to treat them. Frostbite happens when the skin and outer tissues become frozen. This tends to happen on fingers, toes, ears and nose. If you think your child has frostbite, bring them indoors and put the affected area in warm (not hot) water. Do not rub the skin. If the condition persists, call your pediatrician immediately.

Hypothermia happens when the body temperature falls below normal due to exposure to cold temperatures. Signs of hypothermia are shivering, slurred speech and unusual behavior. If you think your child has hypothermia, call 9-1-1 immediately.

2. Layer up

The key to protecting against freezing temps is layering. Wool, silk or fleece layers are preferable. Cotton doesn't hold body heat well and doesn't dry quickly once it's wet. Layers include: a hat, scarf or knit mask to cover face and mouth; sleeves that are snug at the wrist; waterproof mittens (warmer than gloves); water-resistant coat and boots; wool socks and several layers of loose-fitting clothing.

3. Load up

It's just as important to protect skin in the cold when glare from the snow makes sun damage more likely. Apply a high-SPF sunscreen and lip balm with sun block

before heading outside. Kids dehydrate easily even in cold temperatures, so load kids up with water often when they are playing outside.

4. Supervise

Check kids often to make sure they are warm and dry. Kids younger than 8 years old should not be outside without adult supervision. Have them take frequent breaks to come inside, warm up and hydrate. Never send children outside in extreme weather conditions like snow and ice storms.

5. Watch weather

Winter weather conditions can change rapidly. Keep extra, dry clothing and warm blankets on hand at home and when traveling. Watch the weather, and plan to go inside if conditions do become hazardous. Kids should stay indoors when the temperature or wind chill dips into the teens or below.

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