



PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

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NEWS

Hamilton County Public Health Warns Extreme Cold Can Be Dangerous

HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO – With temperatures expected to drop in the next few days, residents should take extra precautions to protect their health and prevent cold-related illnesses such as frostbite and hypothermia.

“Exposure to cold temperatures can result in serious or life-threatening health problems,” said Tim Ingram, Hamilton County Health Commissioner. “Taking proper safety precautions are your best defense against extreme cold weather conditions and reduce the risk of weather-related health problems.”

Be aware of frostbite, hypothermia and dress warmly:

When spending time outdoors during extreme cold, watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia. Frostbite is caused by prolonged exposure to freezing or sub-freezing temperatures. It normally results in a loss of feeling and color in affected areas of the body, usually the fingers, toes, nose, ears, cheeks or chin. Be aware of uncontrollable shivering, which is a sign of hypothermia. Signs of increasing hypothermia include memory loss, disorientation, slurred speech and apparent exhaustion. Both frostbite and hypothermia can be serious health issues and may require medical attention.

Dressing properly for cold weather can be the most effective way to prevent cold weather-related health problems. Dressing in layers, wearing wool or synthetic fabrics, and keeping dry are keys to prevention. Add a scarf, gloves and hat to protect the areas most prone to frostbite. Also, cover your mouth when going outdoors to protect lungs from extreme cold.

Frozen pipe prevention tips:

Freezing temperatures outdoors can make indoor plumbing susceptible to freezing. Most pipes freeze because of exposure to cold blowing air or drafts. Pipes exposed to drafts are typically located in basements, under kitchen/bath cabinets, near cracked windows/foundations, within outside walls, and in unheated crawl spaces.

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The following steps can help prevent indoor pipes from freezing:

- Search your home for pipes in drafty places
- Insulate pipes and seal off drafts
- Leave kitchen and bath cabinets open
- Allow a trickle of water to flow through susceptible plumbing

If your plumbing does freeze, **never** use an open flame or blowtorch to thaw a pipe. Instead, use a hair dryer to thaw and re-establish water flow. Call a plumber immediately if you cannot thaw a pipe or if the line breaks.

Portable heater safety precautions:

Older portable heaters, including those that use kerosene, may give off carbon monoxide. Warning signs of carbon monoxide poisoning include shortness of breath, severe headaches, mental confusion and fainting. If you suspect dangerous levels of carbon monoxide, get fresh air immediately. Contact your local fire department for additional heater safety guidelines.

More information about cold weather precautions is available at www.hamiltoncountyhealth.org.

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