



Turtle Mountain Community Schools

"Ensure Excellence in Education and
Respect for the Local Culture"

Winter Safety Tips

as published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, MassGeneral Hospital for Children, and Product Safety Resources

www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/decwintertips.cfm, www.massgeneral.org, www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/winter-hiver_e.html

Whether winter brings severe storms, light dustings or just cold temperatures, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has some valuable tips on how to keep your children safe and warm. Please feel free to excerpt these tips or use them in their entirety for any print or broadcast story, with acknowledgment of source.

What to Wear

- Dress infants and children warmly for outdoor activities. Several thin layers will keep them dry and warm. Clothing for children should consist of thermal long johns, turtlenecks, one or two shirts, pants, sweater, coat, warm socks, boots, gloves or mittens should be insulated (mittens retain heat better than gloves), and a hat.
- Your child should wear waterproof, insulated boots or shoes that fit properly.
- The rule of thumb for older babies and young children is to dress them in one more layer of clothing than an adult would wear in same conditions.
- Blankets, quilts, pillows, sheepskins and other loose bedding may contribute to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and should be kept out of an infant's sleeping environment. Sleep clothing like one-piece sleepers is preferred.
- If a blanket must be used to keep a sleeping infant warm, it should be tucked in around the crib mattress, reaching only as far as your baby's chest, so the infant's face is less likely to become covered by bedding.

Hypothermia

- Hypothermia develops when a child's temperature falls below normal due to exposure to cold. It often happens when a youngster is playing outdoors in extremely cold weather without wearing proper clothing or when clothes get wet. It can also happen when a person becomes chilled from rain or sweat.
- As hypothermia sets in, the child may shiver and become lethargic and clumsy. His speech may become slurred and his body temperature will decline. Low body temperature affects the brain, making a person unable to think clearly or move well. Infants and elderly are most vulnerable. Symptoms include bright red, cold skin and very low energy.
- If you suspect your child is hypothermic, call 911 at once. Until help arrives, take the child indoors, remove any wet clothing, and wrap him in blankets or warm clothes.

Frostbite

- Frostbite happens when the skin and outer tissues become frozen. This condition tends to happen on extremities like the fingers, toes, ears and nose. They may become pale, gray and blistered. The skin surface may look blotchy, white or blue; and feels hard and waxy. At the same time, the child may complain that her skin burns or has become numb.
- If frostbite occurs, bring the child indoors and place the frostbitten parts of her body in warm (not hot) water. 104 degrees Fahrenheit (about the temperature of most hot tubs) is recommended. Warm washcloths may be applied to frostbitten lips, nose, and ears.
- Do Not rub the frozen parts.
- After a few minutes, dry and cover him with clothing or blankets. Give him something warm to drink.
- If the numbness continues for more than a few minutes, call a doctor.

Winter Health

- If your child suffers from winter nosebleeds, try using a cold air humidifier in the child's room at night. Saline nose drops may help keep tissues moist. If bleeding is severe or recurrent, consult your pediatrician.

- Many pediatricians feel that bathing two or three times a week is enough for an infant's first year. More frequent baths may dry out the skin, especially during the winter.
- Cold weather does not cause colds or flu. But the viruses that cause colds and flu tend to be more common in the winter, when children are in school and are in closer contact with each other. Frequent hand washing, plenty of rest, and teaching your child to sneeze or cough into the bend of her elbow may help reduce the spread of colds and flu. Also a healthy diet boosts their immune system to fight off germs and viruses. Cold symptoms include a sore throat, runny nose, coughing, wheezing, headache, and fever. The flu begins with fever, body aches, sore throat, headache, and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea.
- Children between 6 months and 18 years of age should get the influenza vaccine to reduce their risk of catching the flu.

Waiting for the School Bus

- When it snows, leave some extra time in the morning to get to the school bus stop on time.
- Stand away from where the bus stops. Buses need extra room to stop when there is snow and ice.
- Don't play in the snow while waiting for the bus.
- Don't throw snowballs at the bus or anyone else.
- Don't push or shove around the bus; someone could fall and get hurt.

Tips for your pets

- Pet's feet and ears are not covered with as much fur; watch for frostbite on your pet too!
- Ice and snow can cover scents and disorient your pet. Keep them on a leash so they do not get lost.
- Watch for jagged ice and cracked walkways that can injure the bottoms of your pets' paws.

Prevent Falls

- Help your parents, grandparents or a neighbor to shovel walk ways and driveways clear of snow and ice.
- Keep dry mats by the door to catch snow and ice on boots and shoes.
- Take shoes off at the door to avoid slipping; if you need shoes in the house keep an extra pair by the door or wear non-skid slippers.

Winter Sports and Activities

Set reasonable time limits on outdoor play to prevent frostbite. Have children come inside periodically to warm up.

Ice Skating

- Allow children to skate only on approved surfaces. Know that ice is thinner at the edges of ponds, under overhanging trees or bushes and under bridges. Avoid fast-flowing water and tidal water that is iced on the surface; it can break under the weight of a person, even a child. Check for signs posted by local police or recreation departments, or call your local police department to find out which areas have been approved.
- Advise your child to: skate in the same direction as the crowd; avoid darting across the ice; never skate alone; do not chew gum or eat candy while skating.
- Consider having your child wear a helmet while ice skating.

Sledding

- Keep sledders away from motor vehicles.
- Children should be supervised while sledding.
- Keep young children separated from older children.
- Sledding feet first or sitting up, instead of lying down head-first, may prevent head injuries.
- Consider having your child wear a helmet while sledding.
- Use steerable sleds, not snow disks or inner tubes.
- Sleds should be structurally sound and free of sharp edges and splinters, and the steering mechanism should be well lubricated.

- Sled slopes should be free of obstructions like trees or fences, be covered in snow not ice, not be too steep (slope of less than 30°), and end with a flat runoff. Make sure the bottom of the slope is far from streets and traffic.
- Avoid sledding in crowded areas.

Snow Skiing and Snowboarding

- Children should be taught to ski or snowboard by a qualified instructor in a program designed for children.
- Never ski or snowboard alone.
- Young children should always be supervised by an adult. Older children's need for adult supervision depends on their maturity and skill. If older children are not with an adult, they should always be accompanied by a friend.
- The AAP recommends that children under the age of 7 not snowboard.
- Consider wearing a helmet.
- Equipment should fit the child. Skiers should wear safety bindings that are adjusted at least every year. Snowboarders should wear gloves with built-in wrist guards.
- Slopes should fit the ability and experience of the skier or snowboarder. Avoid crowded slopes.
- Avoid skiing in areas with trees and other obstacles.

Snowmobiling

- The AAP recommends that children under age 16 not operate snowmobiles and that children under age 6 never ride on snowmobiles.
- Do not use a snowmobile to pull a sled or skiers.
- Wear goggles and a safety helmet approved for use on motorized vehicles like motorcycles.
- Travel at safe speeds.
- Never use alcohol or other drugs before or during snowmobiling.
- Never snowmobile alone or at night.
- Stay on marked trails, away from roads, water, railroads, and pedestrians.

Sun Protection

The sun's rays can still cause sunburn in the winter, especially when they reflect off snow. Make sure to cover your child's exposed skin with sunscreen of at least SPF 15. Apply sunscreen twenty minutes before sun exposure and reapply every hour for outdoor activities. You may apply zinc oxide on your child's nose and cheeks. Zinc oxide is an ideal skin barrier especially if your child is skiing and the sun is reflecting off the snow.

Fire Protection

Winter is a time when household fires occur. It is a good time to remember to:

- Buy and install smoke alarms on every floor of your home
- Test smoke alarms monthly
- Practice fire drills with your children
- Make sure to remind your parents to make sure the chimney is clear before lighting a fire in the fireplace or stove.
- Keep flammable objects away from the fire in the fireplace.
- Make sure to watch any candles that are lighted in the house. Do not leave them unattended.