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COLD WEATHER CAUTION!

Safety tips for cold weather



Contact:

Breanna Johnson

Breanna.Johnson@flhealth.gov

239-252-8228

Naples, Fla. — According to the National Weather Service, overnight lows will dip into the 40's F° next week. The Florida Department of Health in Collier County (DOH-Collier) is reminding residents and visitors to stay safe this winter by taking precautions during cold weather.

It is important to take safety precautions during cold weather to prevent hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature. Hypothermia is caused by prolonged exposures to cold temperatures, usually below 40 F°; however, it can also occur at temperatures above 40 F° when a person becomes cold from rain, sweat, or submersion in cold water. Individuals who are more susceptible to hypothermia include older adults that have inadequate clothing, food, or heating, infants sleeping in cold bedrooms, people who remain outdoors for long periods of time, and individuals who use illicit drugs or drink alcohol.

DOH-Collier recommends the following safety tips to stay healthy and safe during cold weather:

- Stay indoors as much as possible. Check on family members, friends, and neighbors who are more vulnerable to cold weather hazards including older adults, young children, and those who are chronically ill.
- When outdoors, wear proper clothing. Dress in multiple layers of loose-fitting clothing. Wear a hat, scarf, and gloves.
- Heat your home safely. Be extremely careful when using a fireplace, wood stove, or space heater. Never leave flames and fires unattended and keep them away from children and pets. Follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Never use generators, grills, or other charcoal burning devices inside your home or garage. Generators should be used 20 feet away from an opening such as windows or doors, with the exhaust pointed away from the building. CO is odorless, colorless, and deadly. Install a CO detector to alert you of the presence of CO, and make sure to change the batteries as needed.
- Eating well-balanced meals can help you stay warm. Drink warm beverages, such as hot tea, to help maintain your body temperature. Consult with your doctor if you have any dietary restrictions.
- Provide pets with warm shelter. If it is too cold for you, it is too cold for your pets. Be cautious of animals that are displaced due to the cold weather. Never approach or touch a wild or feral animal including cats, bats, or raccoons, especially if they appear sick or injured as they could have rabies.

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