



Grandparents Corner

December 2017

Winter Safety Tips, Part 1

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.

What to Wear

- Dress infants and children warmly for outdoor activities. Several thin layers will keep them dry and warm. Don't forget warm boots, gloves or mittens, and a hat. Choose boots that are large enough to comfortably accommodate two pairs of socks.
- Remove drawstrings from clothing which may get caught on tree branches or play equipment. Replace with velcro.
- 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 the same conditions.
- When riding in the car, babies and children should wear thin, snug layers rather than thick, bulky coats or snowsuits.
- Blankets, quilts, pillows, bumpers, sheepskins and other loose bedding should be kept out of an infant's sleeping environment because they are associated with suffocation deaths and may contribute to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). It is better to use sleep clothing like one-piece sleepers or wearable blankets.
- If a blanket must be used to keep a sleeping infant warm, it should be thin and tucked under the crib mattress, reaching only as far as the baby's chest, so the infant's face is less likely to become covered by bedding materials.

Hypothermia

- Hypothermia develops when a child's temperature falls below normal due to exposure to colder temperatures. It often happens when a youngster is playing outdoors in extremely cold weather without wearing proper clothing or when clothes get wet. It can occur more quickly in children than in adults.
- As hypothermia sets in, the child may shiver and become lethargic and clumsy. Speech may become slurred and body temperature will decline in more severe cases.
- If you suspect your child is hypothermic, call 911 at once. Until help arrives, take the child indoors, remove any wet clothing, and wrap them 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 the nose. Skin first becomes red and tingly, then gray and painful, and finally white, cold and hard without pain. Blistering occurs after the skin thaws.
- Playing in temperatures or wind chills below -15 degrees Fahrenheit should be avoided because exposed skin begins to freeze within minutes.
- Prevent frostbite by dressing in layers and covering all body parts when outside in cold weather. Bring children indoors if clothing gets wet.
- If frostbite occurs, bring the child indoors and place the frostbitten parts of their body in warm (not hot) water. 104 degree Fahrenheit (about the temperature of most hot tubs) is recommended. Warm washcloths may be applied to frostbitten nose, ears and lips.

Look for more winter safety tips in next month's Grandparent's Corner!

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics - www.healthychildren.org

Since fires can be deadly for a person with a mobility disability, contact the local fire department for help in evacuation planning, but make sure the advice fits the needs of the person in your care. Help the person memorize a few phrases to quickly explain the situation to first responders. Read the issue and answer True or False to the question below.

1. *Older adults are more than twice as likely to die in a home fire than other age groups.* T F
2. *More than 50% of home fire deaths occur at night.* T F
3. *When in a house fire, call the fire department before you are outside the building.* T F
4. *Place heaters at least three feet from any combustible material, such as bedding and furniture.* T F
5. *Most kitchen fires occur when cooking food is left unattended.* T F
6. *It is a good idea to pour hot water on your windshield to remove ice or snow.* T F
7. *Smoking materials are the number one cause of home fires that kill seniors.* T F
8. *If you see or smell smoke or sparks coming from any electrical appliance or outlet, shut off the main breaker and call an electrician at once.* T F
9. *If a fire starts in a pan, put a lid on it and never throw water on a grease fire.* T F
10. *It is important to ensure escape routes are wide enough for a walker or wheelchair and remove items that may block your way out.* T F

KEY: 1. T 2. T 3. F 4. T 5. T 6. F 7. T 8. T 9. T 10. T