



ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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"PROMOTING & PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF ONEIDA COUNTY"

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Oneida County Health Department Urges Residents to Be Prepared for This Week's Extreme Cold

With extremely low temperatures and wind chill expected to hit Oneida County by Friday, the Health Department is urging residents to be prepared.

"Being prepared is your best defense against extremely cold weather," said Oneida County Director of Health Daniel W. Gilmore, Ph.D., MPH. "Prepare yourselves, your vehicles, and your homes. If you have outdoor pets, prepare now to provide them warm shelter and check in with elderly neighbors and relatives."

Hypothermia and frost bite are concerns when weather temperatures dip this low, and it does not take long for someone who is exposed to the temperatures to be affected. If you must be outside, bundle up. Try to leave as little skin as possible exposed. Use warm, dry clothing such as hats, scarves, mittens/gloves, water resistant jackets and boots. Layering clothes also helps.

Hypothermia is extremely dangerous and needs medical attention. Signs of hypothermia include exhaustion, shivering, confusion, and slurred speech in adults. For babies, signs include having low energy and/or bright red, cold skin. If you notice these signs, take person's temperature. If it is below 95 degrees, medical attention is needed immediately. Try to help warm the body by getting into a warm location, removing any wet clothing, use warm drinks and layers of dry blankets, towels, etc.

Frostbite is freezing of the skin and underlying tissue. It can be permanently damaging if severe. Signs of frostbite include red skin initially which turns to white or grayish-yellow skin, numbness and/or skin that feels usually firm or waxy. If you or someone you know is believed to have frostbite, seek medical care immediately. Until medical care is available, get the person into a warm room. You can use warm water on the affected skin and do not rub, massage, or use the affected area. Do not use electric blankets, heating pads or hot water, for example. The skin may be numb and could be burned.

The Health Department recommends having a winter survival kit in your vehicle when traveling. This kit should include jumper cables, ice scraper, car cell phone charger, blankets, and water. Also check your tire pressure, antifreeze levels and make sure your vehicle has a full tank of gas.

Homes should be winterized. Insulate water lines that run along exterior walls to reduce chance to freezing. Caulk and weatherstrip doors and windows. Furnace and heating systems should be inspected annually. Check vents outside regularly to make sure they are not blocked with snow or ice.

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If you use other sources of heat such as wood stove or fireplace, make sure it is vented to the outside. If you use a generator, it should always be operated outdoors away from windows, doors and vents. If there is not proper ventilation, there is risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

For more information on how to stay safe during extreme cold temperatures, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/guide.html>.