An Ounce of prevention...

Cold Weather Health Precautions

Freezing temperatures, chilling winds, ice storms and snow can cause serious health problems including frostbite and hypothermia (abnormally low body temperature).

Precautions
- Wear several layers of loose-fitting clothing, mittens, a hat and a face cover when outdoors.
- Stay dry.
- Be extra cautious in the wind. A strong wind, even in only moderately cold weather, can cause a wind chill far below freezing.
- At the first signs of possible frostbite – redness or pain in any skin area – get out of the cold or protect any exposed skin.
- Watch for hypothermia symptoms.
  - ◊ Confusion, drowsiness, slurred speech, a drop in blood pressure, shallow breathing and a pinkish tint to the skin.
  - ◊ Anyone with hypothermia symptoms is in immediate danger and should receive medical help right away.
- Check on elderly or sick people, especially if they live alone or in isolated areas.

Food Safety
Winter storms can cause power outages and lead to food safety problems. If you lose power for more than four hours, take these precautions with refrigerated food products:
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible during power outages.
- Discard any potentially hazardous foods such as meats, eggs, dairy products and leftovers that may have reached a temperature of 40 degrees or higher. When in doubt, throw it out.
- Frozen food that has thawed but not exceeded 40 degrees should be prepared as soon as possible. Do not refreeze.

Generators
Avoid exposure to deadly carbon monoxide gas. Never use a generator, charcoal grill, camp stove or other gasoline or charcoal-burning device inside your home, basement or garage or outdoors near a window.

TexasJRAC
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Plan & Prepare for Cold Weather

Are You Prepared for Winter Weather?
When temperatures drop significantly below normal, staying warm and safe can be a challenge. Make sure you have a battery-powered and/or NOAA weather radio, at least a week's worth of food and safety supplies, a water supply, and a way to heat your home in case a winter storm hits. Click here for Winter Weather Checklists

Take Steps
Taking preventive action is your best defense against having to deal with extreme cold-weather conditions.
cold-weather conditions.
- Before a Storm
- During a Storm
- After a Storm

Stay Safe & Healthy
Serious health problems can result from prolonged exposure to the cold such as hypothermia and frostbite.
- Hypothermia
- Frostbite

Related Resources
- Winter FAQs
- Winter PSAs and Podcasts
- Related Links and Resources
- Carbon Monoxide Poisoning
- Power Outages
- More winter storm safety tips from TexasPrepares.org
- More cold weather safety information from the CDC

Source: http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/
Source: http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/news/coldweather.aspx

Alcohol Screening & Brief Intervention

The Issue: Excessive Drinking and Injuries
When people drink too much, they increase the chances that they'll injure themselves and others. In fact, excessive drinking is the leading risk factor for injury in the United States and the third leading cause of preventable death, accounting for more than 75,000 deaths annually – that's one death every 7 minutes.

Broadening our Impact: Redefining the Problem
The problem extends beyond the 4% of the U.S. population that is addicted to alcohol. Another 25% of the population also drinks in excess, but is not addicted. Both groups are at significant risk for becoming injured. The drinking patterns of *both* groups contribute to the significant alcohol-related mortality burden in the United States. To reduce alcohol-related injuries and deaths, public health strategies must engage both groups, that is, *all people who drink too much*. For more than a decade, CDC's Injury Center has supported research and training in alcohol Screening and Brief Intervention (SBI), a process to identify patients who drink too much and to provide brief, onsite counseling.

Alcohol Screening and Brief Intervention (SBI)
CDC has worked with emergency departments and trauma centers to implement SBI. By uniformly screening all incoming patients, they can identify those who engage in risky drinking behaviors, and provide them with brief counseling onsite. Positive research results—reduced medical costs and hospital readmissions—led the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma (COT) to require all Level I trauma centers to use SBI.
Trauma centers care for patients who are severely injured—many patients were injured because they or someone else drank too much. This makes trauma centers ideal settings for providing SBI to those who need it, and brief interventions delivered in trauma centers and emergency departments have been shown to reduce alcohol-related risky behaviors.

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/injuryresponse/alcohol-screening/index.html

Preventing Suicide through Connectedness

Suicide prevention is an important public health strategy. There are a number of factors that put people at higher or lower risk for suicide, many of which are related to the concept of connectedness. Connectedness is the degree to which an individual or group is socially close, interrelated, or shares resources with other individuals or groups. Connectedness occurs within and between multiple levels of the social ecology, that is between individuals, families, schools and other organizations, neighborhoods, cultural groups, and society as a whole. Click here to learn more about connectedness and prevention of self-directed violence.

Connectedness
The degree to which a person or group is socially close, interrelated or shares resources with other persons or groups.

Can Connectedness ever be Harmful?
Overall, studies show that connectedness is an important protective factor for suicide. Research tells us, however, that youths' connectedness to negative peer groups may increase their risk for suicidal behavior.

Connectedness Between Individuals
Strong, positive relationships with others can be protective and prevent against suicidal thoughts and behaviors Connectedness between individuals can lead to increased frequency of social contact, lowered levels of social isolation or loneliness, and an increased number of positive relationships.

What does this look like?
The Tennessee Lives Count youth suicide prevention initiative found that the relationship between youth and gatekeepers (positive adults in their lives, such as teachers, coaches, activity leaders, etc.) mattered. Gatekeepers who reported a stronger connection to youth in their program were almost twice as likely to accurately identify suicidal youth.

Connectedness of Individuals and Their Families
Positive attachments between youth, their families and organizations in their community are important and can increase youth's feelings of belonging, strengthen their sense of identity and personal worth, and provide access to larger sources of support. Community organizations may include schools, and other youth-serving, Tribal, and faith-based organizations.

What does this look like?
The Native American Rehabilitative Association of the Northwest (NARA) developed the Oregon Native Youth Survey specifically to provide information to Oregon Tribes that could be used to improve their programmatic activities, identify the community-level risk and protective factors for suicide, and inform future programming efforts. NARA administered the Oregon Native Youth Survey to 233 Tribal youth from four tribal communities and found that American Indian/Alaska Native youth involvement in Tribal/Native community cultural activities and connection to traditional beliefs and values protected against risks for suicidal behavior. Youth surveyed who endorsed traditional beliefs and values had on average six more protective factors (e.g., feeling positive about the future, perceiving that teachers notice when they do a good job, feeling their community is "safe") than youth who did not report feeling connected to traditional beliefs and values.

Connectedness Among Community Organizations and Social Institutions
Strong formal relationships between organizations and support services can help better ensure that services are delivered and promote a client's sense of well-being.

What does this look like?
The Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program found that a formal referral network connecting organizations with service providers was important for the success of a comprehensive school-based suicide prevention program. The network in- cludes the school, the local crisis response agency, community mental health providers, substance abuse treatment pro- viders, and hospitals. Connecting these organizations through this formal referral network has made it easier for organizations to share information and access services for youth at risk for suicide.

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/suicide/index.html

What Can You Do to Promote Connectedness

The table below may be helpful as a conversation starter with others who share an interest in preventing suicide. Connectedness at the individual, relationship, and community/organizational level of the social ecology are described. Think about what your community is already doing that increases connectedness for youth at each level. Then, brainstorm ideas for what can be added to existing programs or activities in schools, faith organizations, youth serving organizations, or other organizations that have influence with youth and their families.

Connectedness between individuals. Greater degrees of social integration (e.g., number of prosocial friends, contact with trusted, caring adults, low levels of social isolation or loneliness) serve as protective factors against suicidal thoughts and behaviors.	*What current programs or activities are currently offered in our community/organization?* (For example: Afterschool programs that allow youth to positively and constructively interact with one another on a regular basis)
	What can be added to existing programs or activities?
Connectedness of individuals and their families to community organizations. Positive attachments to community organizations like schools and faith-based organizations can increase an individual's sense of belonging.	*What is currently available in our community/organization?* (For example: Regular "family nights" at school that provide parents with the opportunity to visit their child's school, and interact with teachers and other parents)
	What can be added to existing programs or activities?
Connectedness among community organizations and social institutions. Formal relationships between support services and referring organizations help ensure that services are appropriately delivered and promote a clients' well-being—as in the case of the primary care system and the mental health system.	*What is currently available in our community/organization?* (For example: Formal referral network that meets on a regular basis and includes both referring organizations (e.g., schools) and service providers (e.g., mental health providers))
	What can be added to existing programs or activities?