

Winter Safety Tips for Older Adults

Colder temperatures and snowy conditions create unique circumstances that place the elderly population at risk for injury or illness. These include cold exposure, heart attacks, slips and falls, and difficulty breathing.

The Fire Department recommends the following precautions that should be practiced during this time of year to help prevent injury or further illness:

- Limit outdoor activity because extremely cold air can cause respiratory problems, even for the healthy.
- Avoid or limit snow shoveling to decrease the risk of a heart attack.
- Limit exposure to the cold by covering all areas of the body, especially the head.
- Frequently check on elderly neighbors, friends or relatives.
- Have emergency contacts to get in touch with the elderly, like a neighbor or friend.
- The infirm elderly should avoid walking in snow or ice. This only increases their chances of falling, breaking a wrist, or hip that requires long term rehabilitation.
- Dialysis patients need to have emergency contact numbers for their prospective dialysis centers. Follow the center's instructions before calling 9-1-1.
- If possible, maintain an extra month's supply of medications during the winter months. Have a neighbor, friend, or family member pick up refill medications. Many pharmacies also have delivery services that can be utilized.
- Drive only when you need to, and always wear your seat belt.