

Health Unit advises you to be cautious during cold weather

The Leeds Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit would like to advise everyone to **take appropriate precautions** during times when temperatures are expected to be extremely cold (daily high of -15°C and colder or when the wind chill is -25°C or colder).

Cold weather can cause very serious health conditions and even death. Unprotected skin can freeze in as little as 10-30 minutes, and the risk of developing hypothermia is high. **During very cold weather, everyone is at risk; however the elderly, infants and children, people taking certain prescription medications, and people with pre-existing health conditions are in greater danger.** There is also an increased risk of frostbite and hypothermia for outdoor workers and people living without adequate heat or shelter.

During these cold temperatures, the Health Unit strongly encourages the public to **check on family members, neighbours, or friends who may be isolated, disabled, living alone, or without sufficient shelter** and who maybe at greater risk of suffering cold weather related injuries.

During cold weather everyone should take the following precautions:

- Wear layers of warm dry clothing including a hat, mitts, and clothing to block the wind.
- Drink warm, non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages.
- Cover exposed skin surfaces when outdoors.
- Maintain a heated environment of around 20°C / 68°F .
- Be aware of how your medications or health conditions may increase your risk.
- Be aware of the early signs of frostbite and hypothermia.
- Be aware of the dangers of using an oven or space heater as a heating device.
- Keep a winter driving survival kit in your vehicle and be sure to check the weather and road conditions before you travel.

For more information on how to protect yourself during extreme cold visit the Health Unit website at: www.healthunit.org or <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/guide.asp>

For specific cold weather questions call the Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853 or 613-345-5685. Like LGLHealthUnit on Facebook for important public health updates.