

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

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Cold Weather Preparations

Alberta winters can be bitterly cold and when the temperature dips below -40 degrees Celsius, that's when "extreme cold warnings" occur. Wind gusts can be strong enough in our province to make it feel even colder.

It's important to remember a few things during extreme cold warnings.

Try to stay indoors

Roads and other paved surfaces can be snowy or icy during extreme cold warnings. If you must go out, always let someone know where you are going and follow these instructions:

- Check 511.Alberta.ca, [Environment Canada](http://EnvironmentCanada.ca) or download the [WeatherCAN](#) or [AEA Alert](#) app for current road conditions or emergency alerts.
- Try to cover as much exposed skin as possible. Wear warm, waterproof and windproof layers, scarves, neck warmers or protective face liners and waterproof footwear.
- If you are sweating, remove outer layers of clothing or open your coat to avoid getting your clothes wet.

Learn how to prepare a [vehicle emergency kit](#) if you must drive.

Be careful!

Some people are more susceptible to the cold, particularly children, older adults, those with circulation issues, those experiencing unstable housing or those experiencing extreme cold outdoors for long periods of time.

Being cold over a long period of time or being exposed to cold air, water, wind, or rain, can cause a drop in body temperature and, in some serious cases, can cause hypothermia.

What is hypothermia?

Hypothermia occurs when the body [gets cold](#) and loses heat faster than the body can make it. A body temperature below normal can be a sign of hypothermia and can cause shivering, confusion and loss of muscular control (e.g., difficulty walking). It can progress to a life-threatening condition.

If you think someone has hypothermia:

- Call 911 to get medical attention immediately.
- Lay the person down and avoid rough handling, particularly if the person is unconscious.
- Get the person indoors.
- Gently remove wet clothing
- Warm the person gradually and slowly, using available sources of heat.
- Protect the person from further heat loss/eliminate contact with cold surfaces

If someone has symptoms of extreme cold, such as hypothermia, please seek immediate medical attention.

Support is available

Other supports are available for those experiencing unstable housing. [Call 211](#) and press 3 for non-emergency support for shelter, or visit www.alberta.ca/homelessness.

If you work outside during an extreme cold warning, consider taking warm-up breaks or rescheduling your work if possible. Your employer may have options available to help you avoid being in the cold for too long.