

# Cold Weather Safety Tips For Seniors

(NAPSA)—For the 35 million seniors in America, winter can pose many dangers. Icy sidewalks, cool, dry air and the cold and flu viruses pose risks to seniors who are susceptible to illness and accidents during this time.

“Winter-related accidents and illnesses account for a large number of all senior health-related insurance claims during the winter months,” said Scott Perry, chief operating officer, Bankers Life and Casualty Company. “But that doesn’t mean that seniors have to sit this season out. By taking a few precautions, seniors can enjoy winter safely and securely.”

Seniors are more susceptible to loss of body heat or hypothermia. To protect against the illnesses that can result, follow these tips provided by Bankers Life and Casualty Company and the International Longevity Center:

- When outdoors, remember to dress warmly. Wear loose-fitting, layered, lightweight clothing. Mittens are warmer than gloves because fingers generate warmth when they touch each other. Always wear a hat to protect against heat loss since about 30 to 50 percent of body heat loss is through the head.

- Caulking or plastic sheets can protect windows and keep warm air in—also helping to minimize energy bills.

- Keep your thermostat set to 65 degrees to prevent hypothermia. Also, when the temperature



remains at 65, even when you are not at home, you can help to prevent freezing pipes by maintaining a high enough temperature within your walls.

“Seniors bodies aren’t as resilient as they once were. It’s far more important for a 70-year-old woman to stay hydrated than a 30-year-old woman,” said Robert Butler, M.D., president and CEO, the International Longevity Center. “Fortunately, commonsense measures such as drinking enough water and minimizing strenuous activities can help keep seniors safe in cold winter months.”

- Make sure smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors work. CO is a potentially dangerous gas emitted by fuel-burning heaters and appliances. Seniors’ bodies can’t eliminate CO as quickly as younger adults.

- Outdoor winter tasks such as shoveling snow take more energy than many seniors think, espe-

cially because cold weather puts an added strain on the heart. If you go out to shovel snow, do a few stretching exercises to warm up your body. Also take frequent breaks.

- Protect your skin with heavier, more protective creams and lotions. In the winter the relative humidity inside drops to below 60 percent causing skin to lose moisture. This can cause the dryness and itching that bothers many.

- Even though the summer heat is gone make sure that you still drink at least six to eight glasses of liquid a day, especially in dry cold weather, to avoid dehydration. Drinking plenty of water can also help prevent dry skin problems.

“Nurturing your body is the first step,” adds Dr. Butler. “Think about ways to stay firmly planted to avoid injuries.”

- To avoid slips and falls, wear boots that are non-skid.

- If you use a cane, replace the rubber tip before it is worn smooth or it will become slippery, especially when it gets wet.

- If you need to get somewhere in winter weather make sure that your car has been tuned up and has good tires. Also, keep your gas tank near full and let family or friends know your travel plans including routes and times.

To read more articles with tips for seniors, go to <http://www.Bankers.com> and click on “Senior Resources.”