



The Maryland State Medical Society

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TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS AS COLD WEATHER RETURNS

BALTIMORE, January 16, 2019 — With winter weather this past weekend, freezing temperatures expected all week, and more winter weather possible for the coming weekend, there is a high threat for frostbite and hypothermia.

During the cold months of winter it is important to remember:

- When going outside in the cold, wear a hat, scarf, and gloves to prevent loss of body heat through your head and hands, and wear several layers of loose clothing to help trap warm air between the layers. Synthetic fibers and wool are warmer and keep you drier than cotton.
- Cold is bad, cold and wet is worse. Keep dry if in the cold to prevent damage to body parts. Have backup clothing on-hand in case clothing gets damp or wet.
- Avoid exposure to cold, wet weather for lengthy periods of time. If pain becomes severe, rewarm as soon as possible.
- Check in on elderly neighbors and family members. Older adults are especially vulnerable to hypothermia because their bodies' response to cold can be diminished by chronic medical conditions and by use of some medicines, including over-the-counter cold remedies.

It is also important to know the warning signs of hypothermia such as shivering, increased heart rate, mental confusion, frostbite or blisters on fingers. Hypothermia is a dangerous drop in core body temperature which can occur when it is cold inside or outside and the body is unable to produce the heat it needs to function.

Dr. Ben Stallings, MedChi President, states “even a relatively short exposure to cold conditions can result in hypothermia. If you or someone you are with experience these and medical care is not available, begin warming the person slowly, warming the body core first. Get the person into dry clothing, and wrap them in a warm blanket covering the head and neck. Always remember to follow up with a medical care provider as soon as you are able to.”

About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. Formed in 1799, it is still the largest physician organization in Maryland today. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit www.medchi.org.