

Caregiver Assistance News

“Caring for You - Caring for Others”

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

*Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike,
Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio*

www.aaa7.org **Helping You Age Better!**



DECEMBER 2016

Wintertime Safety - Storms



Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. Everyone is potentially at risk in winter storms; however, when caution is used, these winter storm situations should not be life threatening. Winter storms can range from a moderate snow to a blizzard that lasts for several days. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures. Regardless of the severity of a winter storm, you should be prepared in order to remain safe during these events.



When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can produce. Prolonged exposure to cold will eventually use up your body's stored energy. The result is hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature. A body temperature that is too low affects the brain, making the victim unable to think clearly or move well. This makes hypothermia particularly dangerous because a person may not know it is happening and will not be able to do anything about it.

Winter Safety Tips

House fires occur more frequently in the winter due to lack of proper safety precautions when using alternate heating sources (unattended fires, disposal of ashes too soon, improperly placed space heaters, etc.). Fire during winter storms presents a great danger because water supplies may freeze and it may be difficult for firefighting equipment to get to the fire.

Check your furnace filter each month and change when necessary. Have it serviced every year.

- If you use gas, wood, or kerosene heaters, make sure gases are vented to the outside.
- Remove dust from radiators each month and keep furniture and drapes away from radiators.
- Keep space heaters away from any flammable objects, do not keep them on carpets or flammable surfaces, or near water. Check the cord for fraying. Don't use extension cords or run electrical cords under carpets.
- Don't use the kitchen stove to heat the home—it is dangerous.
- Install a programmable thermostat to make the home more energy efficient.
- Insulate water pipes to avoid freezing and bursting. Running water, even at a trickle, helps prevent pipes from freezing. Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing.
- Take advantage of local heating assistance funds and utility no-cutoff programs.



Prevention and Signs of Hypothermia

To Prevent Hypothermia

- Keep the house temperature no lower than 65° F (at 70° F if the person is ill).
- Have them wear warm clothes, and place leg warmers on arms and legs for extra warmth. Use warm blankets when the person is in bed.
- Wear a warm hat outside or a knit hat indoors to keep the body from losing heat.
- Provide a balanced diet.
- Keep moving by walking around the house or down an apartment hallway, and lifting and stretching legs and arms. People with dementia may not dress appropriately for the weather or understand the risk of cold weather.



Signs of Hypothermia

Signs include impaired judgment, shivering, cold pale skin, slow breathing and pulse, slurred or mumbled speech, weakness, drowsiness, loss of coordination, fumbling hands, stumbling steps, confusion and memory loss. Fifty percent of hypothermia deaths occur in seniors over the age of 75. Even mild cold can cause hypothermia in older adults because of compromised circulation or respiratory conditions.

If hypothermia signs are present:

- Wrap the person in blankets, notify the doctor, give warm fluids, and increase room temperature.
- Avoid rubbing the person's skin.
- Do not re-warm the person rapidly. Use a heater on low or warm hot water bottles (wrapped in a towel) on the chest and abdomen.
- Do not give the person alcohol or caffeine. Be alert to signs of heart attack. (Chest pain, shortness of breath, discomfort in the jaw, bluish pale skin, sweating and nausea. Call 911 immediately if hypothermia or heart attack symptoms are present.)

alzheimer's association®

Gallia County

A representative from the Alzheimer's Association will be at the Holzer Thaler Building (beside Fruth Pharmacy on Jackson Pike) the third Wednesday of every month from 9:00 am - 2:30 pm . Please call (740) 710-1821 to make an appointment.

Jackson County

Lunch and Learn (for Family Caregivers) - February 28th from 12 Noon - 1:30 pm at Holzer Medical Center - Jackson. Topic: Living with Alzheimer's for Caregivers: Middle Stage. Call (740) 710-1821 to register.

Lunch and Learn (for Professionals - 1 CEU available) - March 14th from 12 Noon - 1:00 pm at Holzer Medical Center - Jackson. Topic: Effective Communication Strategies. Call (740) 710-1821 to register.

Lawrence County

Lunch and Learn (for Family Caregivers) - January 10th from 12 Noon - 1:30 pm at Ohio University Southern Campus. Topic: Living with Alzheimer's for Caregivers: Early Stage. Call (740) 710-1821 to register.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

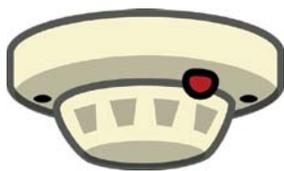
Prepare for Winter Emergencies

- Identify temporary living arrangements in case you are unable to stay in your own home and have a plan for getting there. Share emergency contact information beforehand with everyone who would need it.
- Plan for your medical needs. Have extra medications on hand or identify a pharmacy that will deliver them to you.
- Have canned food, a can opener and one gallon of water per person per day.
- Keep batteries and battery-powered flashlights available and, when needed, use flashlights instead of candles.
- If you have medical equipment, be sure you know how to maintain it or move it in an emergency.



Carbon Monoxide Detectors and Smoke Alarms

A leaky gas stove can give off dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. Install a carbon monoxide detector and check the smoke alarm batteries. They can save a life.



DON'T FALL - BE SAFE!

Arrange to have leaves, snow, and ice removed from stairs and walkways. Use salt or sand throughout the winter months. Replace the cane rubber tip before it is worn smooth and replace it with an ice pick-like attachment that fits onto the end of the cane to help keep you from slipping when you walk. Remember that heavy snow muffles the normal sounds that alert you to oncoming vehicles.



"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it."

Community Wellness Classes

brought to you by the Area Agency on Aging District 7

**Chronic Disease Self-Management • Diabetes Self-Management
A Matter of Balance Falls Prevention • Tools for Caregivers**

Classes available throughout our ten-county district in 2017. Contact us to learn more about these FREE classes and when we will be in your area!

1-800-582-7277 or info@aaa7.org





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Safety Tips - *Winter Driving*

The leading cause of death during winter storms is from automobile accidents. Winterize your car before winter. Drive only if it is absolutely necessary. If you must drive: travel in the day, don't travel alone, stay on main roads, and avoid back road shortcuts. Keep the gas tank full which will keep the fuel line from freezing.

- Keep a winter emergency supplies kit in your car.
- Listen for National Weather Service travel advisories. Do not travel in low visibility conditions.
- Avoid traveling on ice-covered roads, overpasses, and bridges if at all possible.
- Let someone know your destination and when you expect to arrive. Ask them to notify authorities if you are late.
- Never pour hot water on your windshield to remove ice or snow; it may shatter.
- Don't rely only on your car to provide sufficient heat; the car may break down. Keep extra clothing in the car.

