

Network News

*e-Newsletter of the
VA Infant & Toddler Specialist Network*

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The VA Infant & Toddler Specialist Network appreciates your ongoing support this season and throughout the year as we work together to achieve excellence in early care for infant and toddlers.

We wish you a joyful holiday and all the best for the new year!

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Winter Weather Safety Guide

by Beth Turner

from Parents Magazine

While winter can be a season of fun and adventure for children, it also can be a dangerous time. Before the temperature gets any lower, consult the winter weather safety guide below for tips from Parents.com and the American Academy of Pediatrics on how to keep young children safe.

WHAT TO WEAR

Dress children in layers: It will help keep them warm and dry outside.

The rule of thumb for older babies and young children is to dress them in one more layer of clothing than an adult would wear in the same conditions. Always be sure to check the windchill (as well as the temperature) before sending young children out to play. To be on the safe side, don't let children play outdoors if the windchill is 10°F or lower.

KIDS:

- First layer: Thermal underwear, sock liners, wool socks, and glove liners.
- Second layer: Turtleneck, sweater, or a vest, plus sweatpants or ski pants.
- Third layer: Water-resistant jacket, a hat, mittens, and waterproof boots with gripping surfaces. Instead of a scarf, buy a neck warmer. A scarf can get caught on objects, posing a strangulation hazard.

BABIES:

- Infants should only be taken out in very cold weather when absolutely necessary. To prevent overheating, dress children in one or two more layers than you are wearing.
- Be sure that fingers, toes, ears, nose, and chin are covered but that the child can still breathe easily.
- Do not place a blanket or a snowsuit under the car seat straps. In the event of an accident, extra inches between the harness and the baby could cause the child to slip out of the car seat.

NOTE: Blankets, quilts, pillows, sheepskins, and other loose bedding may contribute to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and should be kept out of an infant's sleeping environment. Sleep clothing like one-piece sleepers is preferred. If a blanket must be used to keep a sleeping infant warm, it should be tucked in around the crib mattress, reaching only as far as the baby's chest, so the infant's face is less likely to

become covered by bedding.

PROTECTING BABY'S SKIN

The winter season can be the worst for a child's tender skin. Cold, dry air can sap precious moisture, and the little one's rosy cheeks can quickly become leathery and wind-burned. Luckily, there are basic steps you can take to protect children from seasonal skin hazards.

- Spread it on thick. If any areas of a child's skin look or feel dry, immediately apply a generous amount of baby moisturizing cream or a thick ointment like petroleum jelly.
- Follow your nose. Purchase only perfume-free baby soaps and lotions, which are less likely to be irritating.
- Get misty. "Using a humidifier, especially in your child's room, can minimize the drying effects of the season," says Anthony J. Mancini, M.D., an associate professor of pediatrics and dermatology at Northwestern University, in Chicago. For safety reasons, don't place the humidifier near or directly over a child.
- Be clothes-conscious. Bundling children in too many or too heavy layers can make them sweat, leading to blocked glands and skin irritation, while under-dressing can dry out exposed skin or aggravate a pre-existing condition.
- Cut down on daily baths. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, infants don't need to be bathed every day. Two or three times a week is enough for an infant's first year; more baths may dry out the skin, especially during the winter. If the baby finds a daily bath soothing, make sure it lasts no longer than 10 minutes and that the water is lukewarm, not hot.

COMMON HEALTH CONCERNS

There are some health troubles that emerge more often in the winter than in other seasons.

- Nosebleeds: If a child suffers from winter nosebleeds, try using a cold air humidifier in the child's room at night. Saline nose drops may help keep tissues moist. If bleeding is severe or recurrent, contact your pediatrician.
- Viruses: The viruses that cause colds and flu tend to be more common in the winter. Frequent hand washing and teaching the child to sneeze or cough away from others may help reduce the risk of colds and flu.
- The Flu: Children between the ages of six and 23 months should get the influenza vaccine to reduce their risk of getting the flu.

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HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia develops when a child's temperature falls below normal due to exposure to cold, and often happens when a child plays outdoors in extremely cold weather without proper clothing.

FOR MILD HYPOTHERMIA:

- Symptoms: Shivering; goosebumps; numb hands
- Treatment: Get the child out of the cold, and remove wet clothing. Have the child move about and drink a hot beverage to raise body temperature.

FOR MODERATE HYPOTHERMIA:

- Symptoms: Intense shivering; lack of muscle coordination; lethargy; confusion; drowsiness. In severe cases, the child stops shivering and becomes incoherent and possibly unconscious.
- Treatment: Call 911. If care is unavailable immediately, get the child inside. Dry him/her and wrap him/her in layers. Focus on warming core areas: chest, neck, head, and groin. Don't treat with direct heat.

FOR INFANT HYPOTHERMIA:

- Symptoms: Bright-red, cold skin; low energy; lack of appetite.
- Treatment: Call 911 immediately. Move the baby to a warm room, make sure the clothes are dry, and wrap the baby in layers.

FROSTBITE

Frostbite happens when the skin and outer tissues become frozen. This condition tends to happen on extremities like the fingers, toes, ears, and nose. You can avoid it by setting reasonable time limits on outdoor play, and have children come inside periodically to warm up.

FOR FROSTNIP (MILD FROSTBITE):

- Symptoms: White patches of skin on the ears, nose, cheeks, fingers, or toes; numbness.
- Treatment: Get the child inside. Have the child change clothes and soak affected areas in warm-not hot-water until the skin turns pink. Warm washcloths may be applied to frostbitten nose, ears, and lips. Do not rub the frozen areas. After a few minutes, dry and cover the child with clothing or blankets, and give him/her something warm to drink.

FOR FROSTBITE:

- Symptoms: Waxy, hard, white or grayish-yellow skin; numbness; burning sensation. In severe cases, the skin will turn blue to purple or splotchy; you should immediately go to the emergency room.
- Treatment: Follow treatment for frostnip. Rewarm skin that can't be soaked in water with blankets, or put feet or hands under your armpit or between your hands. Apply sterile gauze. Call a doctor. Do not use direct heat, rub the area, or break blisters.

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Save the Date:

Celebrating Healthy Babies & Tots 2013

Please join us at one of these five exciting institutes for early care providers who serve infants and toddlers!

March 16, 2013	Annandale
	Richmond
April 20, 2013	Abingdon
	Hampton
May 4, 2013	Lynchburg

This exciting professional development opportunity will focus on how effective health and safety practices impact each child's learning and lifelong well-being. Workshop sessions will provide strategies for promoting healthy eating habits and regular physical activity for babies and toddlers in group care.

Institutes will be held 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided.

Information and registration available January 2013 at
www.va-itsnetwork.org

RESOURCES SPOTLIGHT ON:

Wind chill temperature is the temperature it "feels like" outside and is based on the rate of heat loss from exposed skin caused by the effects of wind and cold. As the wind increases, the body is cooled at a faster rate causing the skin temperature to drop. Many layers of clothing trap air between the layers and provide better insulation than one thick layer of clothing. The National Weather Service (NWS) provides convenient color-coded guides for caregivers/teachers to use to determine which weather conditions are comfortable for outdoor play, which require caution, and which are dangerous. These guides are available on the NWS Website at:

www.nws.noaa.gov/om/windchill/ for wind chill

and

www.nws.noaa.gov/om/heat/ for heat index

Resource from: Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards, Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, Third Edition, 2011.

DID YOU KNOW . . .

A pretend snowball toss can be fun and educational!

Show children how to crumple tissue paper to make balls and pretend they are snowballs to throw. A fun winter activity when real snow is not available, this activity enhances both small and large muscle development. Cognitive development is enhanced when you notice the difference between throwing tissue paper balls and other developmentally appropriate items - do tightly compacted tissue paper snowballs go farther than more loosely packed balls? "I wonder. . ." statements are a great motivator to encourage experimentation. Your

description of the children's actions adds to their language development. Also, a pretend snowball toss can be good for motor development and physical activity!

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