



## Press Release

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### Be Prepared and Stay Safe as Temperatures Drop and Snow Falls

Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) Chief Operating Officer Dr. Terry Mason is advising residents to take precautions against cold temperatures and snowy conditions in the coming days.

“To avoid hypothermia and frostbite, dress warmly and avoid spending prolonged periods of time outdoors,” says Dr. Mason. “Winterize homes and cars now, and drive carefully.”

#### Dress for the cold:

- Wear a warm hat, scarf, gloves, coat and boots to keep feet and hands warm and dry.
- Cover as much of your face as possible while outside, and breathe through a scarf to warm air before it enters your lungs.
- Wear several layers of lightweight clothing, rather than one or two layers of heavy garments. The air between the garments acts as insulation to keep the body warmer.

#### Stay safe at home:

- Do not use an oven as a heating device. Read directions before using space heaters and other portable heating units.
- Make sure cracks in windows and doors are repaired. Use towels, rugs or newspapers to keep cold air out.
- Have bottled water, canned foods, flashlights and batteries in case a winter storm keeps you indoors.
- Warming centers are open throughout Cook County. Find the nearest warming center at the Cook County Department of Homeland Security website: <https://www.cookcountyhomelandsecurity.org/cook-county-warming-centers>.

#### Prepare your car:

- Allow extra time when traveling and start your journey with a full tank of gas.
- Monitor weather conditions carefully and adhere to travel advisories.
- Keep a winter storm kit in your car. This should include blankets, food, flares, chains, gloves and first aid supplies.

#### Stay healthy:

- Seek medical attention immediately if you have these symptoms:
  1. hypothermia: confusion, dizziness, exhaustion and severe shivering
  2. frostbite: gray, white or yellow skin discoloration, numbness, waxy feeling skin
- Drink warm, caffeine-free, non-alcoholic beverages to stay warm and hydrated.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist about medications that could cause problems in cold weather.
- The elderly and infants can be particularly vulnerable to extreme weather conditions. Check often to make sure they are safe.

For more information on staying prepared, please visit [www.cookcountypublichealth.org](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org).

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