

Media Release

January 15, 2024

For Immediate Release

Extreme Cold Warning Issued

Environment Canada has issued an extreme cold warning for Chatham-Kent. Wind chill values as cold as minus 30 degrees Celsius are expected through this morning. Cold conditions create an elevated risk to health, such as frostbite and hypothermia. Although the extreme cold warning is predicted to end this morning, cold temperatures are in the forecast for CK through the end of the week.

Symptoms of frostbite include:

- Areas of skin turning red, blue, or grey/white
- Pain, numbness and stiffness, especially in fingers, toes, ears and nose, which are most susceptible

If you suspect frostbite:

- Gently warm the affected skin or immerse in warm, **not hot**, water.
- Don't rub the area—re-warming may take 30-60 minutes.
- Seek emergency medical treatment for a severe, blistering case of frostbite.

Hypothermia occurs when the body temperature drops below normal. Normal body temperature ranges from 36.1° to 37.8°C (97° to 100°F). Symptoms of hypothermia may include pale skin, lethargy, confusion and hallucinations. In the initial stages, a person may shiver a lot, but as their body temperature drops shivering may also decrease.

In a severe case of hypothermia, a person becomes unconscious, their breathing is shallow, and their pulse is irregular and hard to detect. Individuals with these symptoms require immediate emergency medical treatment.

If you suspect someone may be suffering from hypothermia:

- Seek medical attention immediately.
- If possible, move the person to a warm area and dress them in warm clothing.
- Offer warm water, juice or milk.
- Do not offer alcohol or hot drinks (alcohol alters blood flow, making surface blood vessels open wider allowing the body to lose heat faster, providing a false sense of being warmer).

To avoid frostbite or hypothermia:

- Dress warmly in layers, with warm gloves and boots.
- Wear a hat, as 30% of body heat escapes through the head.
- Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration (drinks containing caffeine can dehydrate).
- Alcohol consumption increases the risk of hypothermia.
- Limit outdoor activity.

Remember not to leave pets outside for long, as they are also at risk from overexposure to extreme cold temperatures.

For more information, contact CK Public Health at 519.355.1071, or visit our website at www.ckpublichealth.com.

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