



SASH DEERFIELD VALLEY (802) 464-0438 15 BUTTERFIELD DR. WEST DOVER

### Preparing For The Unique Challenges of Winter

**Falls:** it's easy to fall in winter, especially in icy snowy conditions. • Make sure steps and walkways are clear before you walk. Be especially careful if you see wet pavements that could be iced over. • Clear away snow and salt your walkways at home, or hire someone to do it. • Wear boots with non-skid soles - this will prevent you from slipping. • If you use a cane, replace the rubber tip before it is worn smooth. • Consider an ice pick-like attachment that fits onto the end of the cane for additional traction.

**Dress for Warmth:** Cold temperatures can lead to frostbite and hypothermia, a condition where the body temperature dips too low.

- Cover up! All parts of your body should be covered when you go out in the cold. • If skin turns red or dark or starts hurting, get inside right away. If frostbite has happened: • run the affected area under warm (not hot) water. Call for medical help if you think you or someone else has frostbite.

- Stay indoors (or don't stay outside for very long). • Keep indoor temperature at 65 degrees or warmer. • Stay dry because wet clothing chills your body more quickly. • Dress Smart - protect your lungs from cold air. - Layer up! Wearing 2 or 3 thinner layers of loose-fitting clothing is warmer than a single layer of thick clothing. Think about getting your thermals! - Essential winter wears: hats, gloves or preferably mittens, winter coat, boots, and a

scarf to cover your mouth and nose. Call 911 if you think you or someone else is experiencing hypothermia.

**Injury while Shoveling Snow:** It's one of the evils of winter - snow shoveling. Just make sure that if you choose to shovel, you take some precautions. Remember, when it's cold outside, your heart works double time to keep you warm. Strenuous activities like shoveling snow may put too much strain on your heart, especially if you have heart disease. Shoveling can also be dangerous if you have problems with balance or have "thin bones" (osteoporosis). Ask your healthcare provider whether shoveling or other work in the snow is safe for you.

#### Fires and Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:

During the winter months, it is common to use the fireplace or other heating sources, such as natural gas, kerosene and other fuels. Unless fireplaces, wood and gas stoves and gas appliances are properly vented, cleaned, and used, they can leak dangerous amounts of carbon monoxide—a deadly gas that you cannot see or smell. These and other appliances, such as space heaters, can also be fire hazards. Warning Signs • Headache • Weakness • Nausea or vomiting • Dizziness • Confusion • Blurred vision • Loss of consciousness • Call an inspector to have your chimneys and flues inspected - preferred annually. • Open a window (when using a kerosene stove) - just a crack will do. • Place smoke detectors and battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors in strategic places - especially in areas where you use fireplaces,

wood stoves, or kerosene heaters. • Make sure space heaters are at least 3 feet away from anything that might catch fire, such as curtains, bedding and furniture. • Never try to heat your home using a gas stove, charcoal grill, or other stove not made for home heating. If there is a fire, don't try to put it out. Leave the house and call 911. If you think you may have carbon monoxide poisoning, get into fresh air and get medical care immediately.

**Accidents While Driving:** Adults 65 and older are involved in more car accidents per mile driven than those in nearly all other age groups. Winter is an especially important time to be vigilant when driving because road conditions and weather may not be optimal.

“Winterize” your car before the bad weather hits! This means having the antifreeze, tires, and windshield wipers checked and changed if necessary. • Remember your cell phone when you drive in bad weather, and always let someone know where you are going and when you should be expected back. • Avoid driving on icy roads, and be especially careful driving on overpasses or bridges. Consider alternate routes, even if it means driving a longer distance, if the more direct route is less safe. Often bigger roads are cleared of snow better than smaller roads. • Stock your car with basic emergency supplies such as: - First aid kit - Blankets - Extra warm clothes - Booster cables - Windshield scraper - Shovel - Rock salt or a bag of sand or cat litter (in case your wheels get stuck) - Water and dried food or canned food (with can opener!) - Flashlight - Map (if traveling in new areas)

