

Dear Caregivers,

This October was the third recorded coldest month and we still have a long way to go before we see spring thaw. We must watch out for each other and especially the Elder in the villages to make sure they are warm and safe. Here is some good information and tips about staying warm and the dangers of hypothermia this winter. Just last year in Fairbanks we had several deaths due to hypothermia.

Hypothermia

A COLD-RELATED DANGER

Hypothermia occurs when your body temperature drops below 96 F. Anyone who is exposed to severe cold without enough protection can develop hypothermia. Older people may not notice the cold as easily and can develop hypothermia even after exposure to mild cold. Certain medications, medical conditions or the consumption of alcohol can also make people more susceptible to the cold.

SYMPTOMS OF HYPOTHERMIA

Slow or irregular speech

Shallow or very slow breathing

Fatigue

Confusion

Slow pulse

Weakness or drowsiness

Shivering

Cold, pale skin

TREATMENT

- If you suspect someone of having hypothermia contact your health care provider immediately.
- Re-warming only under a doctor's supervision.

COLD WEATHER PRECAUTIONS

- Dress warmly even when indoors, Wear a warm hat and shoes.
- Eat plenty of foods.
- Stay as active as possible.
- Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages.

- Keep warm in bed with enough clothing and blankets.
- If you're taking medications for treatment of anxiety, nervousness or nausea, ask your doctor if it might affect your body temperature.
- Ask friends and neighbors to look in on you once or twice a day. Your village may have a telephone check-in service for the elderly or housebound.
- Check on your Elders once or twice a day.

Thank-you Caregivers who look after our Elders, you do such a great job!
and if I can make your job any easier just let me know. You can reach me at:

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