



Extreme Cold: Tips for Moms & Caregivers

Extreme cold is becoming more frequent across the country and can bring heavy snow, ice accumulation and wind chill. CARE, with 80 years of disaster relief expertise and a focus on women and girls, knows that Moms and caregivers are often their families' first responders. Here are our tips to prepare before, during and after extreme cold events.

Make a Family Plan

STAY AWARE

- ☐ Check weather forecasts daily and sign up for emergency alerts.
- ☐ Watch for wind chill warnings, winter storm advisories, and power outage updates.
- ☐ Know school and child care emergency plans and communication systems.

HAVE A SHELTER AND EVACUATION PLAN

- ☐ Know where you will go if your home loses heat or power for an extended period.
- ☐ Identify nearby warming centers, family members, or friends you can stay with during extreme cold.
- ☐ Keep important phone numbers written down in case your phone battery dies.

BUILD AN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT

- ☐ Including essential items like: battery/crank radio, warm blankets, extra clothing layers, flashlights and batteries, first aid kit including a thermometer to monitor hypothermia.
- ☐ Store non-perishable food, water, and other infant feeding essentials in case power goes out or you need to stay inside.



Car Seat Tip

Avoid dressing babies in bulky layers/winter coats while in their car seats as it may affect their safety. Instead, lay the coat or blanket over their harness straps for warmth.

Dress for Warmth

LAYER CLOTHING

Layering helps keep warmth in and regulates body temperature.

- ☐ Keep babies and young children dressed in layers of insulated loose clothing, covering their hands, head, neck, and feet to retain heat.
- ☐ Use waterproof outer layers and change wet clothing immediately to help prevent hypothermia.
- ☐ Avoid scarves that increase risk of strangulation.





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Reduce Cold Weather Risks

STAY HYDRATED

Cold, dry air can result in dehydration, and it can happen more quickly in young children.

- ☐ Take regular water breaks even if you don't feel like you are thirsty or physically active.

TRAVEL WITH CAUTION

- ☐ Avoid traveling if conditions are not safe.
- ☐ Wear boots with good traction when walking in the snow or ice.
- ☐ Use handrails when available and walk carefully on slippery surfaces.
- ☐ Avoid carrying children or multiple items at once so your hands remain free for balance.

STAY SAFE DURING POWER OUTAGES

- ☐ Avoid using grills, camp stoves, or ovens to heat your home as it can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.
- ☐ Keep generators outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows and doors to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- ☐ Use flashlights instead of candles whenever possible to prevent fire hazards.

Monitor Symptoms of Hypothermia

Extreme cold weather can put babies and young children at risk for hypothermia as they can become dangerously cold faster than adults.

Symptoms include:

- ☐ Shivering or cold, red skin
- ☐ Body temperature drops below 97.5 degrees
- ☐ Lethargy or low energy levels
- ☐ Weak cry (babies) or confusion and trouble talking (young kids)

Take the following actions:

- ☐ Contact 9-1-1 immediately
- ☐ Remove wet or damp clothing
- ☐ Wrap them in extra warm blankets





Extreme Cold: Tips for Pregnant People

Pregnant people are a high-risk group during extreme cold, and you are more vulnerable to navigating unsafe travel conditions, risks to your growing baby, and sensitivity to temperature changes. Discuss your current risk with a health provider to plan ahead during extreme cold events.

Before a Potential Storm

PLAN EARLY—ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE 36+ WEEKS

- ☐ Talk with your provider ahead of time about:
 - Transportation if roads become icy or impassable
 - Backup delivery locations if your hospital is inaccessible
 - Sheltering options during power outages
 - How to continue prenatal care during severe weather

PROTECT IMPORTANT MEDICAL DOCUMENTS

- ☐ Have a physical copy of your birth plan, key details about your medical history and contact information for your care provider.
- ☐ Store in a waterproof bag or container.

ADD ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO YOUR HOSPITAL BAG

- ☐ Pack a hospital bag that can double as your emergency preparedness kit—ensure it includes all the items you would need for you and your baby post-birth.
 - Include these essentials: water, non-perishable food, flashlight, radio, first aid kit, cash, nursing supplies, warm clothes.

Navigating Cold Weather Risks

STAY WARM, HYDRATED, AND RESTED

- ☐ Dress in layers to stay warm while avoiding overheating.
- ☐ Drink plenty of water, even when temperatures are cold.
- ☐ Use a humidifier if indoor air is very dry.
- ☐ Wash your hands regularly to help prevent seasonal illnesses.





Extreme Cold: Tips for Pregnant People

PREVENT FALLS ON ICE AND SNOW

Icy, snowy weather can be dangerous during pregnancy because your center of gravity has shifted, making it easier to fall.

- ☐ Walk slowly and take short steps on icy or snowy surfaces.
- ☐ Wear shoes or boots with non-slip soles.
- ☐ Ask for help with snow removal whenever possible. If you cannot avoid, take frequent breaks and focus on pushing the snow, rather than lifting.



Pay Attention to any Symptoms

UNDERSTAND URGENT MATERNAL WARNING SIGNS

- ☐ Signs of pre or post eclampsia: (persistent headaches, dizziness, changes in your vision, extreme swelling of your hands, feet or face, upper right chest pain, trouble breathing)
- ☐ Fever of 100.4 or higher
- ☐ Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby
- ☐ Severe nausea and throwing up
- ☐ Severe belly pain that doesn't go away
- ☐ Abnormal vaginal discharge, or heavy bleeding before and/or after giving birth
- ☐ Baby's reduced movement outside of their typical patterns

