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page
10

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winter weather & **your heart**

Follow these winter weather safety tips:

Don't try to lift too much snow at one time.

Always wear a hat; you can lose a lot of heat if your head is exposed.



Remember to wear a ski mask or scarf to protect your face and neck.



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Cold weather can strain the heart and, according to research, increase the risk for a heart attack. When temperatures drop, it is not uncommon for a person with heart disease to experience chest pain or discomfort, also known as angina pectoris. Frigid temperatures also reduce body heat and prolonged exposure can cause hypothermia. In fact, according to the American Heart Association, heart failure causes most deaths in hypothermia.

When cold weather moves into your area this winter, protect yourself by wearing layers for warmth and avoiding prolonged exposure to cold, wind, rain and snow. In addition, avoid drinking alcoholic beverages in excess. Also, avoid excess exertion in cold weather such as vigorous snow shoveling, especially if you are not used to exercise. Snow shoveling can cause plaque to rupture, triggering a heart attack. It is important to warm up your muscles before snow shoveling. Also, work to clear snow gradually and slowly, and take frequent breaks. Those with heart conditions should avoid shoveling snow altogether.

It is also important to know the signs of a heart attack. Call 9-1-1 immediately if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms of a heart attack:

- **Chest pain, pressure or discomfort**
- **Pain, pressure or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach**
- **Shortness of breath**
- **Cold sweat**
- **Nausea**
- **Lightheadedness**

Whether in warm or cold weather, it is always important to follow these tips for heart healthy living.

Nutrition

Healthy heart nutrition guidelines:

- Avoid or limit intake of foods high in saturated fats such as butter, whole milk and cheese.
- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables (at least five servings a day)
- Eat more lean meats and fish (at least two servings of fish per week)
- Eat fiber-rich whole grains as well as nuts, legumes and seeds
- Limit sodium intake to less than 1500 mg a day

Exercise

Physical activity for 30 minutes a day, about five times a week, is recommended. This activity includes anything that makes your body burn calories such as jogging, swimming and other exercises. Walking is one of the simplest ways to increase your heart health.

Maintaining Proper Cholesterol Levels

It is important to know your cholesterol numbers and what they mean. There are two types of cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol.

LDL, or "bad" cholesterol, builds up on the walls of the arteries, increasing the risk for a clot and heart attack. It is optimal to have an LDL of below 100 mg/dL. HDL, or "good" cholesterol, helps to carry away the LDL in blood, stopping it from building up in arteries. It is optimal to have an HDL of 40 mg/dL or above.

Just walking through heavy, wet snow can strain your heart. Pace yourself.



Make sure no one is in the path of snow discharging from the snow thrower chute, particularly if your driveway is gravel.

Never clear clogs in the chute with your hands-always use an approved chute clearing device.

To learn more about heart care at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital or Washington Adventist Hospital, visit www.AdventistHealthCare.com