

**NEWS RELEASE**  
From The  
**Putnam County Health Department**

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**Have A Kit; Make A Plan For Winter Conditions**  
Extra Precautions Required for Health and Safety in Winter Weather

Freezing temperatures, ice and snow are all possible in the coming weeks. Taking some time now to plan and prepare for the impact of colder weather could help you be safe and healthy when winter offers its worst said Lisa Bumbalough, Director of the Putnam County Health Department.

“One of the most important elements for winter safety is a friends and family communication plan,” Bumbalough said. “By sharing plans for travel, times we’ll be outside or if we have a problem with a home heating system, we can help protect ourselves and others from harmful exposure to cold. Plans should also include a list of ‘what ifs’ – such as power outages, vehicle accidents, falls on ice and snow -- and how you would respond to each if they occur.”

One of the most serious effects of exposure to colder weather is hypothermia, a condition in which the body’s core temperature drops to a low level and organs can stop functioning properly. Signs of hypothermia include shivering, disorientation, drowsiness and exhaustion.

If hypothermia is suspected, medical attention should be sought immediately. Alcoholic drinks should not be provided; they may cause the condition to worsen. Getting the person to a warm location, removing wet clothing and warming the body with blankets or dry clothing are also important. The person should not be immersed in warm water; rapid warming can cause heart arrhythmia.

Winter emergency response kits should be kept in the home and vehicles. Items for the home should include extra batteries for communication devices, a hand-cranked emergency radio, fuel for a portable generator if you have one and a supply of food and medications that can last for up to three days.

Winter emergency response kits for vehicles should include extra clothing, blankets, water, snack food, a tow chain or rope, booster cables and a flashlight with extra batteries. Before any longer trips, it’s a good idea to have a mechanic review the condition of your vehicle, particularly the tires, battery and antifreeze, to make sure everything is in good working order. Try to keep your fuel tank at least half-full, which could be extremely important if you get stranded or caught in hours of winter-related traffic.

Pet owners should understand animals can be just as susceptible to cold weather as humans, and efforts should be made to provide appropriate warm shelter, food and water for them.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency provides a wealth of helpful information to prepare for colder weather at: <https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>

The Putnam County Health Department, located at 701 County Services Drive, Cookeville, TN, provides a range of services to protect, promote and improve the health of residents. For more information about services, call 931-528-2531.