LIFESTYLE LESSONS

Personal risk management tips provided by: **Peabody Insurance Agency**

Did You Know?

Snowmen, snow angels and snowball fights are fun activities for children and the young at heart. But being outside in cold temperatures can have an adverse effect on your health if you are not careful. Frostbite is a common ailment for those who have prolonged exposure to cold temperatures and low wind chill factors.

PREVENT FROSTBITE

Though everyone is at risk of developing frostbite when outside in winter, some are more susceptible than others. In fact, children, the elderly, diabetics and those with circulatory problems tend to get frostbite more often.

Symptoms

- Skin discoloration, along with burning and/or tingling sensations

- Partial or complete numbness of the affected area

- Intense pain

If frostbite goes untreated, the affected skin gradually darkens within a few hours, and once the skin is completely destroyed, it turns black and looks loose and frayed, as if it is burnt.

To reduce your risk of frostbite:

- Protect your hands, feet, nose and ears by bundling up in warm, layered, loose-fitting clothing.

- Go inside to warm up periodically, even if you do not feel extremely cold.

- Do not drink alcohol before or during exposure to cold weather, because it may prevent you from realizing that your body has become too cold.

- Avoid smoking cigarettes, which can narrow your blood vessels and increase your risk of frostbite.

- Get out of the cold when your skin appears red or if you experience any pain.

Healthy Hints

If you think that you have frostbite, move to a warm location and place your affected body part in warm water until it is soft and sensation has returned. Then, wrap the area in clean, sterile dressing and visit a doctor for follow-up care.

People who suffer frostbite on their extremities are also susceptible to hypothermia, a dangerous lowering of body temperature. Check for symptoms of hypothermia and treat them first before tending to frostbite injuries.

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