

JIFNEWS

A Quarterly Newsletter from the Somerset County Joint Insurance Fund featuring Safety, Health & Wellness



10 TIPS TO AVOID ICE-SKATING INJURIES:

- 1) Make sure your ice skates fit comfortably and provide strong ankle support. Poor fitting skates can cause blisters. Lack of ankle support makes ankles wobbly and can lead to injuries.
- 2) Inexperienced skaters should learn some ice-skating basics, which include learning how to stop and fall safely, as well as basic safety rules.
- 3) Always look where you are going, even when skating backward.
- 4) Always obey rink rules, such as skating in the same direction as other skaters.
- 5) Always be alert and aware of surroundings.
- 6) Never wear earphones or talk on a cell phone while ice-skating.
- 7) When possible and if circumstances warrant, wear a helmet. This is especially important for young children or beginner skaters.
- 8) Consider wearing other safety equipment such as kneepads and wrist guards. This is especially important for young children and inexperienced skaters.
- 9) Dress appropriately to avoid cold-related injury.
- 10) Make sure you rest when you become tired or cold. More skating accidents happen when you're tired.

7 POND AND LAKE SAFETY TIPS:

- 1) Never skate on an untested lake or pond.
- 2) The ice should be a minimum of six inches thick to be safe.
- 3) Never skate alone. Children should always be supervised by an adult.

- 4) Only skate during the day or if the area is lit.
- 5) Have a cell phone available to call for help if necessary.
- 6) Never cross a frozen pond as a shortcut.
- 7) Never go out on a frozen pond after an animal.

POISON HELP EMERGENCY CHECKLIST:

If someone may have been poisoned, call the toll-free Poison Help Line (**1-800-222-1222**), which connects you to your local poison center, to speak with a poison expert right away. This expert can give you advice on first aid and may save you from a visit to the emergency room.

Below is a checklist to help you in the event of a poisoning:



First steps

- If the person is not breathing, call 911.
- If the person inhaled poison, get him or her fresh air right away.
- If the person has poison on the skin, take off any clothing the poison touched. Rinse skin with running water for 15 to 20 minutes.
- If the person has poison in the eyes, rinse eyes with running water for 15 to 20 minutes.
- Do not use activated charcoal when you think someone may have been poisoned.

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WHY DO PEOPLE DIE SHOVELING SNOW?

There is no end to the terms for "really big snowstorm," and those terms came in handy, particularly in America's snowiest cities. Just check out these average annual snowfall totals, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration:

Mt. Washington, NH – 281.2"	Houghton, MI – 207.7"
Syracuse, NY – 123.8"	Sault St. Marie, MI – 120.4"
Caribou, ME – 108.7"	Flagstaff, AZ – 101.7"
Traverse City, MI – 101.4"	Erie, PA – 100.9"
Watertown, NY – 100.2"	Rochester, NY – 99.5"

But with really big snow storms – and even everyday, run-of-the-mill snowfalls – comes a risk of death by shoveling. Nationwide, snow shoveling is responsible for thousands of injuries and as many as 100 deaths each year.

So, why so many deaths? Shoveling snow is just another household chore, right?

Not at all, says Harvard Health Executive Editor Patrick J. Skerrett. "Picking up a shovel and moving hundreds of pounds of snow, particularly after doing nothing physical for several months, can put a big strain on the heart," Skerrett wrote.

Pushing a heavy snow blower also can cause injury. And, there's the cold factor. Cold weather can increase heart rate and blood pressure. It can make blood clot more easily and constrict arteries, which decreases blood supply. This is true even in healthy people. Individuals over the age of 40 or who are relatively inactive should be particularly careful.

National Safety Council recommends the following tips to shovel safely:

- Do not shovel after eating or while smoking
- Take it slow and stretch out before you begin
- Shovel only fresh, powdery snow; it's lighter
- Push the snow rather than lifting it
- If you do lift it, use a small shovel or only partially fill the shovel
- Lift with your legs, not your back
- Do not work to the point of exhaustion
- Don't pick up that shovel without a doctor's permission if you have a history of heart disease. If you feel tightness in the chest or dizziness, stop immediately. A clear driveway is not worth your life.

Snow Blower Safety

Be safe with these tips from the American Society for Surgery of the Hand and the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons:

- If the blower jams, turn it off
- Keep your hands away from the moving parts
- Do not drink alcohol and use the snow blower
- Be aware of the carbon monoxide risk of running a snow blower in an enclosed space
 - Refuel your snow blower when it is off, never when it is running



5 FOODS THAT CAN HELP KEEP YOU WARM

As winter gets set to bite, we look to traditional warming foods like soup and stews to help keep the chills at bay. But other foods could help keep you toasty. According to Chinese medicine, certain 'yang' foods affect our internal temperature by heating and invigorating us, pushing blood and energy to the surface of the body during the digestion process. So if you're looking to warm yourself up, it won't hurt to try these:

- 1. Chili** | Hot chili peppers contain the compound capsaicin, which gives them their spicy kick. Capsaicin is also used in topical pain-relieving creams, and can cause a burning or stinging sensation when first applied to the skin – just like the heat you feel when you eat chili peppers. Protein from the beans in chili-con-carne can help you build muscle, and the tomatoes and onions in the dish are rich in antioxidants which help keep you healthy too.
- 2. Onions** | Onions are used in traditional Chinese medicine, as a chi or energy tonic, to help increase perspiration, and tackle illnesses brought on by cold weather. The idea is that they encourage energy to move to the body's surface to help keep you warm.
- 3. Ginger Tea** | If you're thinking of warming up with a cup of tea, try adding ginger root to your brew. Ginger is thought to have thermogenic properties that can keep you warm, and some believe it may also boost metabolism and promote blood flow.
- 4. Turmeric** | Turmeric, the spice that gives curry powder and mustard its deep yellow color, is rich in antioxidants and has long been used for healing in India. It's seen as one of the best warming herbs because it's thought to tighten tissues and absorb excess moisture. As well as the heat it helps give to spicy foods like curries, turmeric milk or turmeric tea are hailed as excellent warming drinks too.
- 5. Porridge** | Traditionally, a steaming bowl of porridge is thought to be one of the best winter warmers, as well as being a healthy food because oats can help lower 'bad' LDL cholesterol, which collects on the walls of your arteries. But oats are another Chinese 'yang' or warming food, and are thought to help keep you toasty by mopping up excess dampness inside the body.

POISON HELP (CONTINUED)

Do not wait for signs of poisoning before calling the Poison Help Line. Stay calm. Not all medicines, chemicals, or household products are poisonous. Make sure to have the container of the product you think caused the poisoning nearby. The label has important information.

Be ready (if you can) to tell the expert on the phone:

- The exposed person's age and weight
- Known health conditions or problems
- The product involved
- How the product contacted the person (for example, by mouth, by inhaling, through the skin, or through the eyes)
- How long ago the poison contacted the person
- What first aid has already been given
- Whether the person has vomited
- Your exact location and how long it would take you to get to a hospital