

## Cold Weather Health Warning for Schools

The Canadian Pediatric Society recommends that children be kept indoors if:

- the temperature is below -25°C,  
or
- the wind chill factor is -28 or lower.

The decision to keep students inside for recess, based on the weather, is made by school administrators. Other factors to be considered include:

- Some students are not as active outside as others and therefore are unable to maintain their body temperature. Ice underfoot will make children move more slowly and therefore they will not be as warm.
- Teenagers are less likely to wear extra layers or boots as it alters their fashionable appearance. Wet clothing will also chill the body more quickly.
- Blowing snow and moisture speeds the rate of frostbite.
- Gusting winds can cause the wind chill to vary minute to minute from the local weather forecast.
- Bright sunshine can make you feel as much as 10°C warmer.
- Tall slim builds become colder much faster than those who are shorter and heavier.
- Children with less muscle mass generate less body heat.

### Frostbite:

Unprotected skin can freeze quickly. Early symptoms of frostbite include stinging, redness, swelling, or burning sensations. Further exposure will cause tingling and a grey color of the skin. Once it freezes, the area will have no feeling and be shiny and white.

If you suspect frostbite:

- bring the child indoors immediately,
- do not rub or massage the frostbitten skin,
- gently remove clothing covering the area and slowly rewarm. This can be done by covering ears, nose, or toes with a hand or by placing the child's frostbitten hand under his opposite armpit, or
- use lukewarm (not hot) water to slowly warm affected body parts.

Call the student's parents so they can seek medical advise.

For more information visit [www.caringforkids.cps.ca/keepkidssafe/frostbite.htm](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/keepkidssafe/frostbite.htm)

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## **Protection from the Sun:**

Sun safety is also important during the winter months. The reflection of ultraviolet radiation (UV) off the surface of fresh snow, can nearly double the amount of exposure. Sunscreen should be applied to exposed skin when prolonged exposure is planned, such as outdoor activities like skiing or skating.

The Canadian Dermatology Association recommends:

- using a broad spectrum sunscreen with a SPF of at least 30,
- applying the sunscreen prior to going outdoors, and
- wearing sunglasses.

Canadian winters outdoors can be fun and healthy for children.

For more information visit [www.dermatology.ca](http://www.dermatology.ca)

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