

Winter Safety Tips from BHOSC

Please help prevent accidents and injuries by following these winter safety tips:

Fall Prevention

Most hip fractures occur from falls. Ice and other wintry conditions can definitely increase the chance of serious falls happening.

- Keep walkways and driveways free from snow and ice.
- Replace the metal grip on the bottom of canes with rubber for additional stability on slippery surfaces.
- Improve lighting both inside and outside the home.
- Use a well-secured floor mat by the entrance door to catch any falling snow or ice from shoes or clothing. Wipe all puddles immediately. Also, be aware of any newly-placed mats or rugs.
- Wear shoes with non-slippery soles.
- Avoid wearing slippers or slip-on shoes outside (even if it's only to bring in the paper or mail).
- Use safety rails when walking on stairs.
- Walking along side a building may help with stabilization.
- Don't be shy about asking for a person's arm to hold onto when walking on snow or ice.
- Ask to be dropped off at the entrance when riding with someone.
- Keep eyeglass prescriptions up to date.

Improve Balance

- General exercise improves balance, circulation and muscle strength
- Practice balance exercises (such as Tai Chi)
- Stretching exercises improve your flexibility
- Use proper posture

Shoveling Snow

- Warm up your muscles before shoveling by walking for a few minutes or marching in place. Stretch the muscles in your arms and legs, because warm muscles will work more efficiently and be less likely to be injured.
- Pick the right shovel for you. A smaller blade will require you to lift less snow, putting less strain on your body.
- Protect your back from injury by lifting correctly.
- Stand with your feet about hip width for balance and keep the shovel close to your body. Bend from the knees (not the back) and tighten your stomach muscles as you lift the snow. Avoid twisting movements. If you need to move the snow to one side reposition your feet to face the direction the snow will be going.
- Begin shoveling slowly to avoid placing a sudden demand on your heart. Pace yourself and take breaks as needed.

Assistance in Rapid City:

Scoop It

The United Way has organized a program to assist the disabled and elderly with free snow shoveling services. Call 343-5872 to enroll.

DSS Adult & Aging Services

call 394-2525 Ext. 301

Love INC

718-5683

Senior Companions

721-8884

- Wear a back brace if available.
- If you are inactive and have a history of heart trouble or injuries, talk to your doctor before you take on the task of shoveling snow.
- Avoid caffeine or nicotine before beginning. These are stimulants, which may increase your heart rate and cause your blood vessels to constrict. This places extra stress on the heart.
- Drink plenty of water. Dehydration is just as big an issue in cold winter months as it is in the summer.
- Dress in several layers so you can remove a layer as needed.
- Most importantly — listen to your body. Stop if you feel pain!

Lifting, Climbing and Decorating

- Use proper body mechanics when lifting – bend at the knees and lift with your back straight.
- Use a solid stool or ladder. Avoid using a folding stool.
- If a box is heavy or awkward, take out the contents piece by piece instead of carrying the whole load. (an artificial tree, for example)
- In the case of outdoor decorating, consider yard lights and decorations instead of those that require climbing.
- Don't hesitate to ask for help if you are unsure of your ability to lift or climb.

Be Prepared

- Avoid going out in icy conditions or storms.
- Cancel all non-emergency appointments during these times.
- Stock up on food, pet food and medication supplies during winter months.
- Keep phone numbers of family, neighbors, friends, and emergency services on hand to call for assistance.

Enjoy the beauty of season, and remember to stay safe!