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# Advisory On Cold Weather Ailments



**By**

**Blue Circle Medi Services**



## BLUE CIRCLE MEDI SERVICES HEALTH CIRCULAR Advisory on “Cold Weather Ailments”

As we are aware about the diseases which are common during various seasons, like cold and flu in winter, malaria and dengue in monsoon and diarrhea are common occurrences every year. These diseases can cause a host of problems ranging from simple ones like not feeling well or having to take leave from work, university or school.

Some of the common illnesses seen during winter period are described below to ensure adequate precautions are taken before onset of a disease thus enabling us to reduce illness, and stop missing work or studies as well as prevent hospitalization.

**Some health problems, such as cold, sore throats, asthma and cold sores, are triggered or worsened by cold weather. Here's how to deal with cold weather ailments.**

### **Colds**

Colds can be prevented by washing hands regularly. This destroys bugs that one might have picked up from touching surfaces used by other people, such as light switches, door handles or escalator railings at metro stations etc.

It's also important to keep the house and any household items such as cups, glasses and towels clean, especially if someone in the family is already suffering from cold.

**Top tip:** If you get a cold, use disposable tissues instead of fabric handkerchiefs to avoid constantly reinfected your own hands.

Regularly wash your hands.

Use separate bath towel

Cover your face while sneezing and coughing.

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## Sore throats

Sore throats are common in winter and are almost always caused by viral infections.

There's some evidence that changes in temperature, such as going from a warm, centrally heated room to the cold outdoors, can also affect the throat.

**Top tip:** One quick and easy remedy for a sore throat is to gargle with warm salty water. Dissolve one teaspoon of salt in a glass of part-cooled boiled water. It won't heal the infection, but it has anti-inflammatory properties and can have a soothing effect.

## Asthma

Cold air is a major trigger of asthma symptoms such as wheezing and shortness of breath. People with asthma should be especially careful in winter.

**Top tip:** Stay indoors on very cold, windy days. If you do go out, wear a scarf loosely over your nose and mouth, Be extra vigilant about taking your regular medications, and keep reliever inhalers close by, Keep yourself warm.

## Painful joints

Many people with arthritis say their joints become more painful and stiff in winter. There's no evidence that changes in the weather cause joint damage.

**Top tip:** Many people get a little depressed during the winter months, and this can make them perceive pain more acutely. Everything feels worse, including medical conditions. Daily exercise can boost a person's mental and physical state.

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#### Heart related problems

Heart related problems are more common in winter. This may be because cold weather increases blood pressure and puts more strain on the heart. The heart also has to work harder to maintain body heat when it's cold.

**Top tip:** Stay warm in your home. Heat the main rooms you use and use a warm water bottle or electric blanket to keep warm in bed.

By drinking oral rehydration fluids (available from pharmacies), risk of dehydration can be reduced.

Wrap up warm when going out and wear a hat, cap, scarf and gloves.

#### Cold hands and feet

Raynaud's phenomenon is a common condition that makes fingers and toes change colour and become very painful in cold weather (especially in the areas where the winter is severe and freezing).

Fingers can go white, then blue, then red, and throb and tingle. The small blood vessels of the hands and feet go into spasm, temporarily reducing blood flow to hands and feet. In severe cases, medication can help, so consulting the doctor is advised.

**Top tip:** Don't smoke or drink caffeine (both can worsen symptoms) and always wear warm gloves, socks and shoes when going out in cold weather.

#### Dry skin

Dry skin is a common condition and is often worse during the winter, when environmental humidity is low.

Moisturising is essential during winter. Moisturising lotions and creams act as a sealant to stop the skin's natural moisture evaporating away. The best time to apply moisturiser is after a bath or shower while skin is still moist, and again during night.

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**Top tip:** Have warm, rather than hot, showers. Water that is too hot makes skin feel drier and itchier.

### Flu

Flu in people aged 65 and over, pregnant women and people with long-term health conditions, including diabetes, kidney disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), are particularly at risk.

The best way to prevent getting flu is to have the flu jab (or flu nasal spray for children aged 2 to 17). The flu vaccine gives good protection against flu and lasts for one year.

If a person over 65 or having a long term health condition, is eligible for the pneumococcal vaccine, which provides protection against pneumonia.

**Top tip:** Find out if you're at risk of getting flu by asking your GP.

Cold weather doesn't have to go hand in hand with illness. Here are some simple things you can do to help yourself stay well this winter.

- **Keep warm** – this may help prevent colds, flu or more serious health conditions such as heart attacks, strokes and pneumonia.
- **Eat well** – food gives you energy, which helps to keep you warm. So, try to have regular hot meals and drinks throughout the day.
- **Get a flu jab** – flu vaccination is offered to people who are at risk, pregnant women and some young children to ensure that they are protected against catching flu and developing serious complications.

This advisory is based on the article published in Medical Journals. Please click the below link  
<http://www.kc.bluecircle.in>

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