



# American Red Cross

in Greater New York

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## RED CROSS OFFERS TIPS FOR STAYING WARM AND SAFE OUTDOORS IN WINTER

*Note to editors: A Red Cross spokesperson is available to discuss these topics, and other health, safety and preparedness issues.*

**New York, NY...December 30, 2005** – With winter in full swing, the American Red Cross in Greater New York (ARC/GNY) urges New Yorkers to dress appropriately for cold weather and to recognize the symptoms of frostbite and hypothermia. ARC/GNY warns that frostbite, a severe reaction to cold exposure, can cause permanent harm. And hypothermia, an abnormally low body temperature (less than 95°F), can be fatal.

The Red Cross recommends that you dress appropriately before going outdoors. The air temperature does not have to be below freezing for someone to experience cold emergencies such as hypothermia and frostbite. Wind speed can create dangerously cold conditions even when the temperature is not that cold.

**ARC/GNY urges New Yorkers to follow these valuable cold weather safety tips:**

- **Dress in breathable (cotton, wool) layers** so you can adjust to changing conditions.
- **Avoid overdressing or overexertion** that can lead to heat illness.
- **Cover exposed skin.** It can become frostbitten in as little as 30 seconds.
- **Wear a hat, preferably one that covers your ears.** Most body heat is lost through the head.
- **Wear mittens.** They provide more warmth to your hands than gloves.
- **Wear waterproof, insulated boots** to keep your feet warm and dry and to maintain your footing in ice and snow.
- **Build layers against the cold** with clothing and blankets.
- **Keep moving.** Stand up and move about to allow circulation to reach all body parts.
- **Sit on a blanket or cushion** when outside, not on cold pavement or concrete.
- **Drink fluids.** Dehydration can occur even when the temperature is below freezing. Hot chocolate is a great way to remain well hydrated.
- **Get out of wet clothes immediately** and increase your core body temperature with a blanket or warm fluids like hot cider or soup.
- **Avoid drinking caffeine or alcohol** if you believe that you or someone you are trying to help has hypothermia or frostbite. Alcohol diminishes the body's ability to feel the cold.

New Yorkers can find out how to respond to cold-related emergencies such as frostbite and hypothermia by taking an ARC/GNY First Aid class, scheduled frequently in every area we serve—all five boroughs and Rockland, Sullivan, Orange and Putnam counties. For more information, call 1-877-REDCROSS or visit [www.nyredcross.org](http://www.nyredcross.org).

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