**Don’t Over Do It!**

Winter is the peak season for heart attacks. Studies show that winter accounts for 30% more deaths than summer and fall. Overexertion and hypothermia are two dangerous conditions you need to be cautious of during the cold winter months. Knowing the warning signs will help decrease your chance of a heart attack.

**Overexertion**

Prevent overexertion by avoiding activities like lifting a heavy shovel full of snow. Even walking through heavy, wet snow or snowdrifts can strain the heart.

Symptoms of overexertion are:
- Chest pain
- Severe breathlessness
- Dizziness
- Loss of muscle control and nausea.

If you experience any of these symptoms, stop what you are doing immediately and rest!

**Hypothermia**

Hypothermia means your body temperature has fallen below normal. It occurs when your body can't produce enough energy to keep the internal body temperature warm enough. It can kill you. In fact, most hypothermia deaths are caused by heart failure.

Symptoms of hypothermia include:
- Lack of coordination
- Mental confusion
- Slowed reactions
- Shivering and sleepiness

**Stay Warm!**

To stay warm this winter –
- Wear layers of clothing.
- Wear a hat or head scarf. Ears are especially prone to frostbite.
- Keep your hands and feet warm, too, as they tend to lose heat rapidly. Mittens are warmer than gloves.
- Keep your home thermostat set no lower than 68°F.

**Early Symptoms of a Heart Attack**

Sometimes heart attack symptoms occur sporadically and give a false impression that they will go away. However, don’t ignore the following early warning symptoms that occur in 50% of heart attack victims:

- An ache, pressure, tightness, squeezing or burning sensation or feeling of fullness in fullness in the center of the chest
- Discomfort that comes on with activity, but decreases with rest
- Pain that lasts for hours or days
- Pain that increases with frequency and intensity over time

If you experience any of these early warning symptoms, seek medical attention immediately!
Late Symptoms of a Heart Attack

If you experience any of these symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately!

- Chest pain above the navel
- Pain in the arm, chest, back, jaw, or throat
- Numbness, weakness
- Shortness or breath, pallor
- Nausea and vomiting
- Profuse sweating

Increased Risk of Heart Attack

Your risk of heart attack is higher during the winter months because –

- Cold weather makes the heart work harder.
- Overexertion is more likely with activities like shoveling snow.
- Particles from burning wood irritate the lungs and decrease oxygen in the bloodstream, which stresses the heart.
- Too much food, alcohol, salt and stress make you more susceptible to heart attack.