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## Simple tips to stay safe, healthy over holiday season

EDMONTON – 'Tis the season to be merry and, by following a few simple tips, you can ensure the season will be a safe one, as well.

### **Be prepared, protect yourself and know your options:**

- Fill prescriptions to ensure you have enough medications to carry you through the holiday season. Keep an up-to-date list of current medications.
- If you are hosting friends and family over the holidays, make sure they bring their medications.
- Before heading off to any travel destination, be sure to check in with an Alberta Health Services (AHS) travel health clinic, which will provide you with information and immunization. Clinic staff will also ensure you're aware of country-specific health risks and are protected against infectious diseases.
- Immunization is the single most effective means of protecting yourself against influenza viruses already circulating in our communities. It's not too late to be immunized. Vaccine continues to be offered to all Albertans (six months of age and older), free of charge. Remember: it takes up to two weeks after receiving your influenza immunization to be protected against influenza, so make plans to get your vaccine today. For more information, including local clinic schedules, visit [www.albertahealthservices.ca/influenza](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/influenza) or call Health Link Alberta at 1-866-408-5465.
- Knowing your health care options will help you get the care that's right for you. Emergency department care is available for you if you need it. Use it wisely. Emergency care may not be necessary if you're fighting the flu; if you sustained a sprain, cut or scrape; if you're confused about medications; or if you're worried about a sick child. Find out what health care options are available to you by calling Health Link Alberta at 1-866-408-5465, or visit [www.albertahealthservices.ca/options](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/options).
- Check with your family doctor or primary care network to see what days and hours they are available over the holiday season. Health Link Alberta can also help direct you to services if those offices are closed.

### **General safety tips for you and your child:**

- Check weather forecasts to anticipate clothing needs throughout the day.
- Choose play areas with warm shelters nearby.
- Dress in layers of clothing, with an outer layer that is windproof and waterproof.
- Wear a hat keeping ears covered, wear mittens instead of gloves, and wear warm, waterproof boots. Wear a tube-like neck warmer instead of a scarf.
- Wear neck warmers instead of scarves and remove drawstrings from clothing.
- Building tunnels can be dangerous. Tunnels may collapse and suffocate a child.
- Monitor children for wet clothes, chilling, frostbite, and fatigue.
- Teach children the signs of frostbite and hypothermia as well as the importance of dressing warmly.

### **Safety tips for skating:**

- When skating on natural bodies of water, make sure the ice is thick enough to be safe.
- Warm up and stretch before skating.
- Wear an appropriate helmet.

### **Safety tips for sledding:**

- Only sled when temperatures are above -19 C.
- Choose hills with a gentle slope and long run off area.
- Sled on snowy hills, avoid icy surfaces.
- Be sure the hill is free of jumps, bumps, holes, and obstacles.
- Stay away from roads, rivers, railways, and parking lots.
- Only sled in the daylight or on well-lit hills.
- Children should be actively supervised by a responsible adult and children under five should have a responsible adult on the sled with them.
- Wear an appropriate helmet (such as a bike or ski helmet).
- Go down the hill sitting up or kneeling on the sled – never go head first.
- Keep your arms and legs within the sled.
- Move quickly out of the way of others and walk up the side of the hill.
- Know your limits. Rest if you are tired and go inside if you are cold.

### **Tips for hosting:**

- Never pressure anyone to have a drink.
- Offer a selection of non-alcoholic beverages as well as plenty of food.
- Serve alcohol vs. having an open and unrestricted bar.
- Stop serving alcohol at least one hour before the party ends.
- Don't serve alcohol to an intoxicated guest.
- Support those who have been drinking to not drive.

### **If you're drinking alcohol:**

- Drink slowly. Have no more than two drinks in any three hours. For every drink of alcohol, have one non-alcoholic drink. Always consider that your age, body weight and health problems might suggest lower limits.
- Eat before and while you are drinking.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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