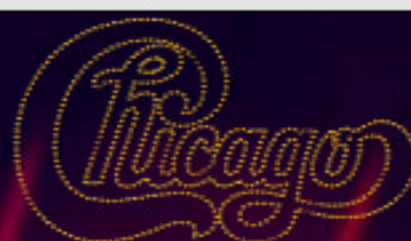


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Stay warm! Your life may depend on it

By Jacqueline Howard, CNN

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Tips to stay warm and healthy

What can people do to stay warm and healthy this winter? An important risk-reducing measure hinges on wardrobe.

"It's really important to dress in layers, so ... put on more than one pair of gloves and then a mitten on top of that, because the air that's trapped in between those layers help to keep you warm," Salamon said.

"Tight-fitting clothes are not a good thing, because you're not able to get the benefit of the layers. You really need to have looser sweaters, shawls if you're sitting inside, to try to layer up. It helps to have a ski mask to protect your ears and your nose," she said. "If you get wet, like if you're out playing in snow or shoveling snow, take off wet clothes, because the wet clothes really make it worse. They make things colder. ... Boots should be waterproof."

Preventive measures not only involve dressing for the cold but also avoiding too many cocktails in cold weather, said Colletti, the Mayo Clinic specialist.

"Avoid drinking alcohol when in the cold, as mental awareness is impaired, thereby limiting ability to recognize symptoms of significant cold exposure. Alcohol also causes dilatation of the body's blood vessels, increasing heat loss," she said.

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Cold weather is also associated with weight gain, so another tip to stay warm and healthy this winter is to keep moving, said **Dr. Luis Navarro**, a physician and founder of the Vein Treatment Center in New York.

"Weight gain is common during the colder holiday months, and this can put our legs and circulatory system under more stress. Weight gain and colder temperatures could make varicose veins and spider veins worsen, due to the fact that blood is not efficiently pumping through the body," Navarro said.

"Even though it's cold, exercising and moving around helps to optimize circulation, which not only helps to keep our circulatory system healthy, but it can also help to keep us warm," he said.

"Also, if you do experience leg pain as a result of restricted blood flow, I suggest elevating the legs for periods throughout the day so that they are raised above the heart. This helps maximize circulation."