

FALLING FOR HEALTH

Chronic Disease and Cold Weather



Photo Source: <https://vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/six-common-winter-health-problems/>

As we enter the month of December, it is crucial to be mindful of your health, despite the busyness of the holiday season. Certain chronic diseases may be exacerbated by the cold weather that is quickly approaching. Continue reading to understand how the weather can affect pre-existing conditions and how to combat some of these effects.

Obesity

The cold weather might discourage you from exercising regularly, but don't fret! If you bundle up and dress properly, it is safe to walk, run, jog, or bike outside even in the winter! It is equally important to remember to eat a balanced diet this season. To learn more about the food groups, healthy recipes, and more, follow this link: <https://www.myplate.gov/>.

Asthma

Freezing temperatures are a known trigger for asthma attacks. If you have asthma, limit outdoor exposure, wear scarves and face coverings when you do go outdoors, and use a humidifier (Meyer, 2019). It is important to get your flu shot and focus on preventative measures, such as hand-washing.

Arthritis

Cold weather lessens the barometric pressure, which might lead to increased inflammation and stiffness in individuals with arthritis (Mbagwu, 2019). If you have arthritis, try to keep moving your body through exercise to help prevent joint stiffness and joint pain. Dress warmly when you go outside to lessen the effects of the cold weather.

Autoimmune Diseases

Cold weather adds stress to your body, making it more susceptible to illness or flare-ups ("Navigating the Winter...", 2018). This time of the year it is especially important to dress warmly, get your flu shot, move your body, and focus on preventative measures such as hand-washing.

Depression

Depression may be ongoing or triggered this season by new events, decreased sunlight/daylight hours, and much more (Meyer, 2019). It is vital to get enough sleep, get some fresh air, lean into your support system, and to seek help if you are experiencing symptoms of new or worsening depression. Visit this link for more information regarding mental health resources: https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71550_2941_4868---,00.html.

References:

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