

## LET'S GET READY FOR WINTER SEASON!

Winter can be a challenging season, but it does not mean we have to stay inside for months. With the right precautions we can enjoy being outside just as much, even if it is freezing cold outside. Here are some tips to support you to make your winter activity outdoors as comfortable as possible

### Clothing

Wearing proper clothing is important, to protect you from the cold as well as to protect you if you were to fall. Gloves and some kind of hat are essential. You can protect your face by wearing a scarf and by applying some vaseline cream. Back in the days they used to wear a shammy on the chest, it still works!

You do not have to preheat high quality clothing, as that leads to excess transpiration. The sweat will then make you cool down, which might cause some body parts to freeze. It is better to use different layers. In that case you can just take off one piece of clothing if you are too warm, and put it on again if you cool down. Be careful with your feet, do not preheat your socks too much, you do not want your feet to start sweating.

Are your fingers freezing cold? Wear mittens! Buy mittens made of Neoprene, Fleece, Thinsulate and GoreTex, but make sure they stay dry.

Remember that most of our body warmth is lost through our heads. So it is important to keep your head warm, here, too, fabrics like Fleece, GoreTex, ... work best.

People in a wheelchair are recommended to use an insulation blanket. It protects you from cooling down too much and too fast. The body warmth will then be preserved under the blanket, instead of getting lost in the air.

### Skin

Protecting your skin from the cold is no unnecessary luxury in Winter and it is often forgotten about. Especially the face and the hands are sensitive to cold. The skin naturally has a protective layer, but it can be damaged by external factors like cold, wind, sun and temperature

changes, but also by pollution, aging and tobacco. Where the skin produces less sebum, the skin will become dry. Hands and lips are most vulnerable.

The best cure is using cream or oil to keep the skin moisturized and prevent a cracked skin.

Lips dry out very easily. It is therefore good to use a lip balm on a regular basis. However, cracked lips can also be the result of a B2 (riboflavin) deficiency. Make sure you take in enough vitamin B2 through your food (liver, egg, yeast, fish, wholewheat products, milk, sprouts, leafy vegetables, meat) or through supplements. Keep in mind that B2 can be destroyed in the body by the female hormone estrogen (one of the ingredients of the birth control pill).

Cracked lips can also suggest a deficiency in essential fatty acids (you can find those in fish, sunflower seeds, olives, ...). They make sure your skin stays elastic and flexible.

Make sure you do not eat too much salt, as salt has a dehydrating effect on the lips.

If your skin feels prickly or inelastic, it means it is too dry. In fact all types of skin benefit from regular moisturization.

### Respiratory infections

In Winter ALS patients are much more vulnerable to lung infections and respiratory problems compared to healthy people, because they often have a hard time coughing. Infections can also be the result of the inability to breathe deeply, resulting in poor air circulation in the lungs.

Here are some suggestions to prevent general respiratory infections:

- Keep a 1 meter distance (or more) to people who have a cold, a runny nose, a bronchitis or who have a cough or a fever. Watch out: a viral infection is contagious and can lead to bacterial infections.

# TIPS

- A bacterial infection causes fever (38 degrees or more). Go see your doctor if you have one of the following symptoms: yellow or green mucus in the nose, bronchial secretions for several hours in a row, pain in or around the sinuses.

- Avoid exposure to dust and vapour. If you smoke, it is better to stop. Also, it is recommended to avoid passive smoking. Try to stay as active as possible and move your body to your own ability. Staying active and changing positions regularly helps to keep the lungs open. Even just turning around in bed can be helpful.

- As we breathe through our noses and mouths, it is important to keep those clean. A wet and cold Winter can often lead to infections, a runny nose and canker sores. You can rinse your nose with saline (ask your pharmacist). Canker sores can be prevented by drinking a lot and rinsing your mouth with a disinfecting mouth wash.

- Ask your doctor for an influenza vaccine and a pneumococcal vaccination. The latter lowers the risk of contracting a bronchitis.

Translation: **Magali**