

Winter Care for Older Adults

The winter months can bring exciting events such as holiday decorating, travel, and snow. But it can also bring slips, falls, and other health emergencies. For older adults, being prepared for these winter events is important and can save lives. With parts of the country experiencing an arctic blast of winter weather, now is the time to check in with older adult family members, friends and neighbors. Here are a few [considerations](#) when helping older adults prepare for winter weather:

- The immune system weakens with age. Once [flu season ramps up](#) and the cold air blows in, it's much more important for older adults to visit their doctor if they become sick;
- Have back-ups for medical equipment. Make sure they have extra hearing aid batteries, glasses, and other medical supplies, such as oxygen;
- Be sure they have enough medicine to last for a week. Keep medications, copies of prescriptions, and treatment information in an emergency supply kit;
- [Falls](#) are the leading cause of injury among older adults in the U.S. Non-slip shoes are a great way to help them navigate slippery conditions; and
- [Shoveling](#) can put too much strain on the heart and be dangerous if individuals have problems with balance or osteoporosis. Older adults, especially those with heart disease or high blood pressure, should leave snow shoveling to others.

It's always a good idea to have a [communications plan](#). If you do not live near your older adult family members, make arrangements for neighbors to check in with them. Also, ask the neighbors if it's ok for older family members to contact them in an emergency. With your help, older adults can enjoy the winter months safely. Check out this [FEMA guide](#) for more tips to help prepare older adults for emergencies.