

Winter Weather Advisory: Don't Get Caught in the Cold

Atrium Health Navicent physicians offer winter weather preparedness tips for families

MACON, Ga., Jan. 16, 2024 – Central Georgia may not have experienced a white Christmas or a snowflake-filled New Year, but colder weather is on the horizon. According to climate data, January and February are often the coldest months of the year in Macon. Atrium Health Navicent physicians want to make sure you and your family are prepared for inclement winter weather.

"While snow is incredibly rare in our area, we get our share of bitterly cold days that can turn dangerous if you're caught unprepared," said Dr. John Wood, medical director for the Emergency Center at Atrium Health Navicent The Medical Center. "Be mindful of the weather forecast and make preparations early, and don't forget to check on neighbors and family members who may need a helping hand."

Family safety

It's important for parents to ensure their children are dressed warmly when preparing to go outside or travel in winter weather. Be sure to check the weather forecast for your destination and dress appropriately. Babies, especially, require thoughtful consideration when planning their clothing, and careful monitoring for signs they are too cold. Your baby is too cold if they have mottled skin and blueish hands and feet.

"When the temperature is less than 50 degrees your infant should wear a hat when outside. Remember to take off the hat when returning to a warm environment," said Dr. Christie Peterson, an Atrium Health Navicent pediatrician. "A good guide, since an infant will lose heat quicker than an adult, is to dress the infant in one extra layer compared to the adult. Be sure to take off the bulky outer layer when strapping children into their car seats."

Experts offer the following tips for staying safe and warm at home and while traveling.

Home safety

- Have a qualified HVAC service check your heating system before cold weather sets in.
- Check the batteries in smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure they are in good working order.
- Have flashlights and extra batteries handy. Candles can be dangerous if left burning.
- If you use a space heater, be sure to keep it at least three feet away from walls, curtains and other flammable materials. Kerosene heaters can be dangerous and are not recommended indoors.
- Use care around fireplaces and wood stoves. Have both inspected annually by a professional.
- Ensure your emergency kit is up-to-date and contains food, water, medication, money, work gloves, a flashlight with extra batteries, a crank radio, blankets and a small shovel. Do not forget your pet's food and water needs. If there are infants and toddlers in the home, be sure to include items like diapers and formula.
- Create a buddy system with neighbors and check on each other in the event of adverse winter weather.

Car safety

- Make sure your car battery is properly charged and fluids are topped off.
- Fill your tank up with gas at the beginning of your trip.
- Always have jumper cables in your car just in case your vehicle breaks down.
- Replace all dirty filters, including fuel, air, PCV and others.
- Check your car's heater system to ensure it's working properly, and that the window defroster works.

- Keep an emergency kit in your car that includes items such as boots, gloves, blankets, water, snacks, medications, an additional car charger and other essentials.

No matter where you are this winter, there is the chance that a loved one could find themselves in trouble if they get too cold. Doctors advise that if someone is shivering uncontrollably, is less responsive, confused or difficult to awaken, you should seek immediate medical attention.

If you or a loved one are experiencing concerning symptoms after prolonged exposure to winter weather, seek appropriate medical treatment. For emergency situations, call 911 or seek care at the nearest emergency center. Atrium Health Navicent offers emergency care at the following locations:

- Atrium Health Navicent Beverly Knight Olson Children's Hospital (888 Pine St., Macon)
- Atrium Health Navicent The Medical Center (770 Pine St., Macon)
- Atrium Health Navicent Peach Emergency Department (1960 Hwy 247 Connector, Byron)
- Atrium Health Navicent Baldwin (821 North Cobb St., Milledgeville)
- Putnam General Hospital, Atrium Health Navicent Partner (101 Greensboro Road, Eatonton)

For non-life-threatening injuries, visit your nearest urgent care provider. Atrium Health Navicent provides urgent care at three Macon-Bibb County locations:

- Atrium Health Navicent Urgent Care North (3400 Riverside Drive, Macon)
- Atrium Health Navicent Urgent Care East (1339 Gray Highway, Macon)
- Atrium Health Navicent Urgent Care Northwest (5925 Zebulon Road, Macon)

About Atrium Health Navicent

Atrium Health Navicent is the leading provider of health care in central and south Georgia and is committed to its mission of elevating health and well-being through compassionate care. Atrium Health Navicent is part of [Advocate Health](#), which is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, created from the combination of Atrium Health and Advocate Aurora Health. Atrium Health Navicent provides high-quality, personalized care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region. As part of the largest, integrated, nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation's leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home – including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. Throughout its 125-year history in the community, Atrium Health Navicent has remained dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. It is also one of the leading teaching hospitals in the region, helping to ensure viability for rural health care for the next generation. For more information, please visit www.NavicentHealth.org.

About Advocate Health

[Advocate Health](#) is the third-largest nonprofit integrated health system in the United States – created from the combination of Advocate Aurora Health and [Atrium Health](#). Providing care under the names [Advocate Health Care](#) in Illinois, Atrium Health in the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama, and [Aurora Health Care](#) in Wisconsin, Advocate Health is a national leader in clinical innovation, health outcomes, consumer experience and value-based care, with [Wake Forest University School of Medicine](#) serving as the academic core of the enterprise. Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, Advocate Health serves nearly 6 million patients and is engaged in hundreds of clinical trials and research studies. It is nationally recognized for its expertise in cardiology, neurosciences, oncology, pediatrics and rehabilitation, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Advocate Health employs nearly 155,000 team members across 68 hospitals and over 1,000 care locations and offers one of the nation's largest graduate medical education programs with over 2,000 residents and fellows across more than 200 programs. Committed to equitable care for all, Advocate Health provides nearly \$6 billion in annual community benefits.

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