

MEDIA RELEASE

Communications Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health Unit Issues Frostbite Alert for the City and County of Peterborough and Curve Lake and Hiawatha First Nations



The Peterborough County-City Health Unit has issued a Frostbite Alert because of forecasted wind chill values of -32 on January 13. This Frostbite Alert remains in effect until further notice.

Extreme cold events are a potentially significant health risk and can have a severe impact on the health of vulnerable populations including infants, the elderly, people with circulatory problems, and the marginally housed. Local social service agencies rely on Health Unit frostbite alerts to determine if services should be extended or enhanced.

In order to protect the health of people in Peterborough County and City and Curve Lake and Hiawatha First Nations, the Health Unit advises local residents to take the following precautions:

- Check face and extremities frequently for signs of frostbite. Exposed skin can freeze in as little as 10 to 30 minutes.
- Consider re-scheduling outdoor recreational activities, especially during the evening. There is a serious risk of hypothermia and frostbite if outdoors for long periods.
- Use caution when shoveling snow especially for those that have heart, respiratory (breathing) problems or other medical conditions. Snow shoveling is strenuous and can cause an onset of heart or respiratory problems.
- Check on the elderly or people with disabilities living alone.

Cold related illnesses include:

Hypothermia:

Symptoms/signs include: shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling/uncoordinated movements, memory loss, slurred speech, drowsiness.

Frostbite:

Symptoms/signs include: white/greyish skin area, skin that feels unusually firm or waxy, or numbness.

Increases in other health problems can also be seen, especially for those with other chronic medical conditions such as heart conditions.

Further information about the health risks of extreme cold and the Health Unit's Extreme Cold Response Plan can be found at www.pcchu.ca under "My Home & Environment" by clicking on "[Extreme Weather – Cold](#)".

For further information, please contact:

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