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**Staying Safe & Warm in Winter**  
by Denise Mann

Cold weather doesn't have to mean the end to outdoor fun. In fact, for many, wintertime and outdoor activities go hand in hand. Whether you're hitting the slopes, taking a winter stroll or building a snowman in the front yard, here are a few considerations and suggestions for staying safe and warm in the great outdoors.

**Winter weather hazards**

**Stay hydrated**  
While it's easy to remember to drink water when playing sports under the hot sun, it's just as important to stay hydrated during winter activities, when you may be sweating without realizing it. "The feet of skiers or snowboarders can sweat out about an ounce of moisture into each boot before lunch and that fluid has to be replaced," says Henry Hornberger, general manager of [Brian Head Resort](#) in Utah. Even slower-paced activities can result in dehydration.

"Keep a water bottle next to you, not in your backpack where it is hard to reach, and take a sip of water every 10 to 15 minutes," Kammler says.

Early signs of dehydration include a dry, sticky mouth, thirst, decreased urine output, headache, fatigue and dizziness.

**Common-sense safety tips**  
A little forethought goes a long way toward increasing your enjoyment and protecting your safety during wintertime activities. Before going outside:

- Make sure someone knows where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Keep an eye on the weather report, be aware of the wind chill and know when to reschedule your activity.
- Limit length of exposure, especially when it's extremely cold.
- Pack ample water and some snacks in case you are outside for longer than planned.
- Dress properly in thin layers. The layer closest to your body should wick away moisture.
- Know the signs and symptoms of frostbite, hypothermia and dehydration.
- Don't forget to apply sunscreen with a sun protection factor of 15 or higher. Even in winter, the sun's rays can be strong, especially at high altitudes.
- Pack a winter activities safety kit. Include a pocketknife, small flashlight, cell phone, small first-aid kit, matches and hand warmers.

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