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# PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN

**FEBRUARY 2012**

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: PLAYING IN THE SNOW

### Make sure your child stays warm during the winter

**W**hen there has been a snow storm and your children are home from school, you may be wondering how you will keep them entertained all day. Letting your children go outside is a great way for them to use some energy and have fun too! Being comfortable outside in winter weather can be challenging, but by following these tips and suggestions you will be able to help your children enjoy the snow and give you a few moments of peace and quiet.

#### Dress in layers

When sending your child outside in the snow, it is important that he or she stay warm. You certainly want your child to have fun and enjoy the snow, and when dressed properly, he or she can enjoy the snow! The best way to dress your child is to make sure he or she wears many layers of clothing. The more layers of clothing your child wears, the more likely he or she will be able to stay warm. Another benefit of wearing many layers is that as your child runs around and his body warms up, layers can be removed.

Depending on how cold it is outside, there may be some days when your child will need more



layers than others. A good rule of thumb would be to add one extra layer of clothing.

#### How to layer

- **For the upper body** – You will want to start dressing your child in a warm, long-sleeved undershirt, such as a thermal shirt. Next your child will need a turtle neck, and one or two

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## *Drinking lots of fluids will keep your child from becoming dehydrated.*

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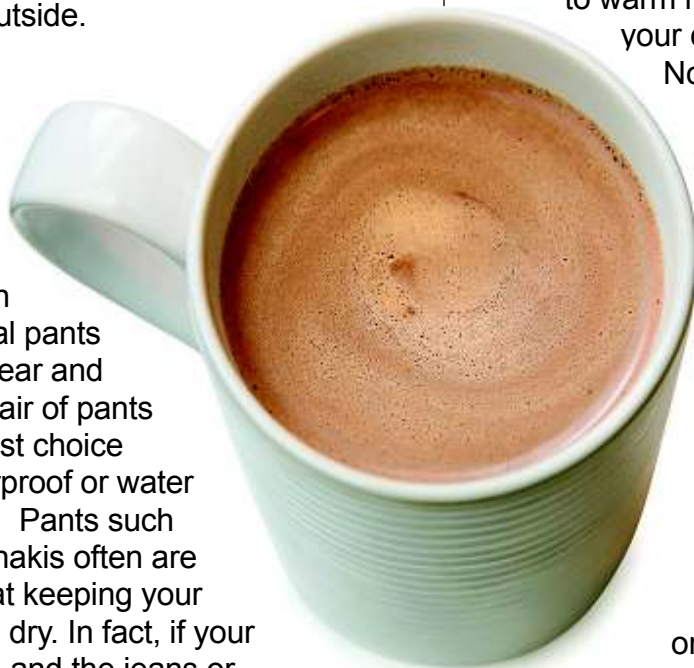
more shirts, a sweater and a coat. You may need to adjust the layers based on how cold it is outside.

- **For the lower body** – If you can, layer clothing on the bottom half of your child. Start with a pair of thermal pants or long underwear and layer another pair of pants on top. The best choice would be waterproof or water resistant pants. Pants such as jeans and khakis often are not very good at keeping your child warm and dry. In fact, if your child falls down and the jeans or cotton pants get wet, he could end up colder because the pants will stay wet.
- **Other Important layers** – Do not forget to have your child layer her socks. If she has some waterproof shoes, such as boots, she should wear those as well. Sneakers tend to get very wet in the snow and your child's feet could get cold in a hurry.

Do not forget that your child should wear a hat. There are many different types of hats, but as long as your child will keep it on, it will help to keep him warm. Other items that will help your child stay warm are scarves, earmuffs, and gloves. Do not be afraid to bundle your child up.

### **Drink something warm**

Does your child drink a lot of water during the summer when he or she is outside playing? In the winter, it is just as important that your child drink lots of fluids. If your child has come in from outside in the snow, it may be a good idea to offer something warm to drink such as warm



milk, hot chocolate or warmed apple juice or cider. If your child drinks something warm, such as hot chocolate or warm apple juice, it will help to warm him or her from the cold and keep your child from becoming dehydrated. No matter what is offered to drink, make sure your child has plenty of fluids.

### **Listen to your body**

When your child is playing outside he or she may not realize how cold it actually is out there. You should make sure they are not getting too cold. You should look to see if they are shivering or if your child's teeth are chattering. Your child may not want to come in from the cold. If you notice he or she is acting tired, ask him or her to come inside.

Being outside when there is snow on the ground can be a lot of fun. No matter how much fun your children are having, make sure they are being careful and staying safe by layering clothes, listening to their body and drinking something after coming inside.

#### **REFERENCES:**

- Nemours KidsHealth. How to be safe in ice and snow. February 2011

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