

Cold weather can have a serious impact on health, particularly for older people and those with heart and lung problems, as it increases the risks of heart attacks, strokes and chest infections.

**The following advice can help you keep warm at home:**

- the best way to keep warm is by wearing multi-layers of clothing and to wear a hat and gloves, even indoors;
- if you can't heat all the rooms you use, it is important to heat the main living room to at least 18°C (64.4°F) if you can and also before going to sleep, heat the bedroom to this too. If you can, heat the rest of the house to at least 16°C (60.8°F).
- It is important to make sure your heating is safe and that your house is properly ventilated, to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. If you have not done so already, you should install a carbon monoxide alarm (further advice available at [NIDirect](#))

**If your electric is working:**

- set the timer on your heating to come on before you get up and switch off when you go to bed;
- in very cold weather set the heating to come on earlier, rather than turn the thermostat up, so you won't be cold while you wait for your home to heat up;
- never use an electric blanket and hot water bottle together as you could electrocute yourself;
- if you have an electric blanket, check what type it is – some are designed only to warm the bed before you get in and should not be used throughout the night;
- make sure your electric blanket is safe to use by getting it tested every three years.

**You can help keep warm by:**

- wearing plenty of thin layers, rather than one thick one is better at trapping heat
- putting on a coat, hat, scarf, gloves and warm non slip shoes or boots when you go outside;
- wearing clothes made of wool, cotton, or fleecy synthetic fibers;
- wearing bed socks and thermal underwear at night.
- eat warm food and take warm drinks regularly. Food is a source of energy which helps to keep your body warm.
- keep active. When you're indoors, try not to sit still for more than an hour or so. If you find it difficult to move about, stretching your arms and legs can also help keep you

warm.

**During very cold spells particularly where there is risk of snow and ice:**

- Make regular contact with vulnerable people and neighbours you know to be at risk in cold weather – ensure they have access to warm food and drinks and are managing to heat their home adequately
- stay tuned into the weather forecast
- ensure you are stocked with food and medications in advance (have deliveries or ask a friend to help if needed)
- take the weather into account when planning your activity over the following days. Avoid exposing yourself to cold or icy outdoor conditions if you are at a higher risk of cold related illness or falls
- discuss with friends and neighbours about clearing snow and ice from in front of your house and public walkways nearby, if you are unable to do this yourself
- if you must go out, dress warmly and wear non-slip shoes. Tell someone where you are going and when you will get back. Keep your mobile phone (if you have one) on you and charged
- if you are concerned about your own health or that of others, alert emergency services

Information on energy efficiency and ways to save energy can be found [here](#).

You can find information on keeping warm and well and on Cold Weather Payments at the links below;

- [NIHE Energy Efficiency Support \(including Oil Buying Network, Affordable Warmth Scheme, Boiler Replacement Scheme\)](#)
- [Cold Weather Payment](#)

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