

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

Preventing Winter Injuries

(SALEM, OHIO) – February 15, 2021 – Winter in Ohio doesn't just bring cold temperatures and snowy days, but also an increased risk for certain types of injuries.

"During the winter, hazardous conditions like snow and ice have the potential to lead to orthopaedic injuries such as sprains, strains, dislocations and fractures," said Fellowship-trained Orthopaedic Surgeon Jason Boyd, M.D. "The good news is that many of these injuries can be prevented by taking precautions when you head outdoors."



Jason Boyd, M.D.

Some of the most common winter accidents and injuries include:

Slipping on Snow and Ice

Each year, falls result in more than 2.8 million injuries that are treated in emergency departments, and they increase in likelihood during the winter months.

"Walking on snow and ice can be tricky for anyone, but older adults are especially at risk for injury from slips and falls," Dr. Boyd explained. "As a normal part of aging, we become more susceptible to falling as our balance begins to decline. Older adults also have decreased bone density, increasing their chance of sustaining a serious injury such as a hip fracture."

"It's important to stay alert and take extra care when walking in winter conditions. Move slowly, take small steps, and keep an eye out for ice and other potential hazards. Stay on treated sidewalks and paths and use handrails if possible. In addition, wear properly-fitted shoes or boots with good traction for winter walking."

Shoveling Snow

"Removing snow from your driveway and sidewalk can be a vigorous task. In addition to placing strain on your heart, the repetitive bending and lifting of heavy snow may put you at risk for an orthopaedic injury. Some of the most common injuries associated with shoveling snow include sprains and strains, especially in the back and shoulders."

"There are several things you can do to reduce your chances of injury during snow removal. Before starting, warm up your muscles with light exercise for about 10 minutes. Use a shovel that is comfortable for you to lift and suitable to your height. Shovel small loads at a time and try to push the snow instead of lifting it. If you must lift, keep your knees bent and lift with your legs and not your back. When moving snow, turn your entire body instead of twisting it, which can place extra strain on your back."

Winter Sports

"Activities like sledding, ice skating and skiing can be great fun during the winter months. Unfortunately, they can also lead to injuries, from sprained wrists to knee injuries and broken bones."

"Before participating in winter sports, try to strengthen your muscles and stay in good physical shape with flexibility, strength and cardiovascular fitness. Because cold muscles, tendons and ligaments are more vulnerable to injury, warm up properly prior to starting your winter activity. Additionally, follow the safety guidelines for your sport, which includes wearing appropriate protective gear like goggles, helmets, gloves and padding. Never participate in a winter sport alone, and always stop if you are tired or in pain."

Car Accidents

"Icy and slippery roads can make driving hazardous and put you at increased risk for auto accident injuries, which commonly include fractures of the upper and lower extremities."

“It goes without saying that if you don’t have to venture out, it’s best to stay home until the roads have been plowed and treated. However, if you do have to travel, drive slowly and allow yourself extra time to reach your destination. In addition, keep a safe distance between yourself and the car in front of you, which gives you more time to react in the event of a skid, and brake slowly. As always, wear your seatbelt.”

When to Seek Treatment

“Minor sprains and strains can often be cared for at home using the ‘RICE’ method of rest, ice, compression and elevation. However, if you experience significant pain or swelling; loss of movement or strength in the injured limb; or signs of deformity, you should seek medical evaluation and treatment for your injury,” Dr. Boyd advised.

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