



Winter Walking Safety

Walking in winter can be just as enjoyable and do-able as in fair weather months. Don't let the cold and snow keep the kids from trekking to school, in the community or on the trails. Just keep a few safety and comfort tips in mind and they'll be walking in a winter wonderland:

Clothing Tips

- Keep hands, head and ear lobes covered. Be sure hats and scarves don't block hearing or vision.
- Wear mittens as they keep hands warmer than wearing gloves.
- Wear warm, waterproof boots with good treads for better traction on snow and ice.
- Carry umbrellas for those rainy days.
- Wear woollen or insulating synthetic clothing to help retain body heat.
- Layer clothing and wear a coat that is waterproof or water resistant and deflects the wind.
- In extreme cold keep as much skin covered as possible.
- Beware if the temperature falls below -25°C or if the wind chill is -28°C or colder. This is when exposed skin freezes in only a few minutes.
- Change wet clothes as soon as possible - tuck extra socks and mitts into those backpacks.
- Be sure to wear sunscreen - yes, you can still get a sun burn in winter.

Walking Tips

- On dark winter mornings make sure kids are visible to oncoming traffic with reflective tape or tags on jackets, backpacks, boots, umbrellas, etc.
- Always walk on the sidewalk. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing oncoming cars and stay on the shoulder or very close to the curb.
- When crossing at crosswalks, wait until cars come to a complete stop before crossing. They may not be able to stop suddenly on icy roads.
- Take care near large snow banks that obscure visibility for walkers and cars at street crossings.
- Stay away from snowploughs or snow blowers. Blowing snow from these machines can reduce visibility and may include flying pieces of ice and gravel.
- Ask the school, school board and municipality to ensure sidewalks are cleared on at least one side of the route to school and on school property.

Sources: Green Communities Active & Safe Routes to School, Way to Go! School Program and Go for Green.