



Child Care and Cold Weather

When the cold weather arrives, there is the potential for serious health problems resulting from prolonged exposure to the cold. In fact, frostbite and hypothermia are the most common cold weather emergencies for children.



Very young children are more susceptible to **hypothermia** that results from exposure to cold conditions. When a child's body begins to lose heat faster than it can produce it, the low body temperature created effects the brain and the ability to think clearly. Hypothermia usually occurs in extremely cold temperatures, but can occur at more moderate temperatures due to rain, or submersion in water.

Some signs and symptoms of hypothermia include:

- Shivering
- Exhaustion
- Confusion
- Slurred speech
- Drowsiness

If a child is exhibiting any of the signs and symptoms of hypothermia you should immediately call 911 and move them to a warm area. You should remove any wet clothing and gently begin to warm the child with dry blankets or clothing, and by using skin-to-skin contact.

Children are also very susceptible to **frostbite**, an injury to body tissue caused by exposure to extreme cold. It most often affects their nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers and toes. Frostbite can cause permanent damage and severe cases can lead to a possible loss of a limb.

Some signs and symptoms of frostbite include:

- Pain, burning, pins and needles or numbness in the affected area
- Skin feels hard beneath the surface
- Skin discoloration from a grey, blue or waxy white, to a waxy yellow appearance

If a child is exhibiting any of the signs and symptoms of frostbite you should remove them from the cold and gently re-warm the affected areas with warm water or body heat. It is important NOT to rub or massage the affected area as this may cause tissue damage. As well, direct heat may cause burning because the area is numb. If there is a chance that the child will be susceptible to re-freezing, delay warming until the danger is eliminated. If the frostbite is severe and covers large areas of the body, call 911 immediately.

As child care providers it is important to be diligent when it comes to protecting children from cold weather, by limiting exposure, and protecting faces, ears, hands and feet appropriately.





Partners with the Community
for Healthy Children

NutriSTEP® ... You can help preschoolers have healthy eating habits!

Until recently, there has been no clear way of screening for nutrition problems in preschoolers. NutriSTEP® (Nutrition Screening Tool for Every Preschooler) is now available in York Region! NutriSTEP® is a valid and reliable nutrition risk screening tool. It is a fast and simple way to review eating habits and identify nutrition problems in children 3-5 years of age.

The NutriSTEP® questionnaire includes 17 questions about the child's eating and activity habits (e.g., how often they eat "fast food", physical activity, if the child is allowed to determine how much to eat). Each question has a score and when added together gives a nutritional risk score for the child (i.e., low, moderate or high risk). Based on the child's score, the questionnaire provides the next steps required for the family (e.g., talk to the NutriSTEP® registered dietitian at no cost for children who have a high risk score). The NutriSTEP® questionnaire takes approximately five minutes to complete.

Here are some suggestions for when to give the NutriSTEP® questionnaire to parents of 3, 4 and 5 year olds:

- As new children register or start at your centre/program
- At children's 3rd, 4th and 5th birthdays
- At parent and teacher meetings/interviews
- If you suspect there is a nutrition problem
- Whenever you give a parent a copy of the 3, 4 or 5 years Nipissing District Developmental Screen™ or the 36 or 48 months Early Referral Identification Kit (ERIK)

The NutriSTEP® questionnaire and accompanying nutrition education fact sheet called *How to Build a Healthy Preschooler* are available free of charge from York Region Community and Health Services Department, Nutrition Services. To order copies for parents, please call 1-877-464-9675 Ext. 4335 for a NutriSTEP® order form.

For more information about NutriSTEP®, please go to www.york.ca/NutriSTEP or contact Mary Turfryer mary.turfryer@york.ca.



Nutrition Screening Tool for Every Preschooler

Instructions

- Below are questions about your preschool child's (3 to 5 year old) eating and other habits.
- Think about your child's every day habits when answering. Check (✓) only one answer for each question.
- There is a number from 0 to 4 beside each answer. This number is a score for that question. At the bottom of each page is a box for the score for the page. For each page, add up the scores for each question.
- At the end of the questionnaire, you will add the page scores to get the total score.

1. My child usually eats grain products:
Examples are bread, bagel, bun, cereal, pasta, rice, roti and tortillas.

More than 5 times a day
 4 to 5 times a day
 2 to 3 times a day
 Less than 2 times a day

2. My child usually has milk products:
Examples are white or chocolate milk, cheese, yogurt, milk puddings or milk substitutes such as fortified soy beverages.

More than 3 times a day
 3 times a day
 2 times a day
 Once a day or less

3. My child usually eats fruit:

More than 3 times a day
 3 times a day
 2 times a day
 Once a day
 Not at all

Total Score for Page 1

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