

News from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

February 23, 2015

Senior Centers Offer Warm Respite on Cold Winter Days

On cold winter days when temperatures are well below freezing, the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders encourages residents to be aware of their health and safety.

“As temperatures drop and wind speeds increase, heat can leave your body more rapidly,” said Freeholder Brian D. Levine, human services liaison. “If you’re unprepared, exposure to cold temperatures – both indoors and outdoors – can cause serious health problems, especially for the elderly.”

Individuals age 65 and older are more prone to effects from the cold than younger people because they are not able to adjust to temperature changes as well. Adult seniors also are more likely to have a medical condition or take medications that impair the body’s ability to regulate its temperature.

All residents are reminded of three simple steps to be healthier during extremely cold weather:

- 1 - Dress in layers, and be sure to wear a warm hat.
- 2 - Drink lots of water and non-caffeinated and non-alcoholic beverages.
- 3 - Be aware of the warning signs of hypothermia in adults: shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech and/or drowsiness.

For more information on what you can do to prevent cold-related illness, visit the [CDC website](#) or <http://www.emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/pdf/extreme-cold-guide.pdf>

Those who live alone should ask a friend or caregiver to check on them during a snowstorm and in frigid weather. If no one is available, contact the county [Office on Aging and Disability Services](#) to register for the Telephone Reassurance Program.

The county Telephone Reassurance Program is a free service that offers a daily phone call by trained staff to people who live alone and feel isolated from the community due to age, health problems or living arrangements. Knowing that someone will call each day to check on an individual’s safety and well-being provides a sense of reassurance and security.

The program also helps older adults by providing information and assistance for services that will help to enhance their quality of life. In addition, seniors who

experience issues with the heat in their homes should call the Somerset County Office on Aging and Disability Services at 908-704-6346 or 1-888-747-1122 for assistance.

For those seeking to escape the cold, the Board of Chosen Freeholders invites residents age 60 and above to enjoy the [seven senior-wellness centers](#) operated by the county Office on Aging and Disability Services. Open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., the senior centers offer a warm respite and a variety of educational, recreational and entertaining activities for active older adults, including wellness programs and health screenings. The centers are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

For more information, [contact one of the centers](#) or call the Somerset County Office on Aging & Disability Services toll free at 1-888-747-1122.

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