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With temperatures set to plummet over this week, Cambridgeshire health experts are urging people to look out for others as the cold weather bites.

A Level 3 Cold Weather Alert has been triggered for Cambridgeshire. Severe cold weather is due to make across county from Monday 28 Jan until the morning of Friday 1 February - with chances of snow developing overnight on Tuesday into Wednesday, and potentially Thursday evening.

Severe cold weather can be very harmful, especially for people aged 65 or older, the very young or those with chronic disease.

Val Thomas, Consultant in Public Health at Cambridgeshire County Council, said:

“It is really important to keep warm during this cold weather – both inside and outdoors as it can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious health problems, such as heart attacks, strokes pneumonia and depression. Cold weather can be very harmful, especially for people aged 65 or older: it weakens the immune system, increases blood pressure, thickens the blood, and lowers body temperature; increasing the risk of high blood pressure, heart attacks, strokes, and chest infections.

“Wear a few layers of thin clothing rather than one thick layer when out and about, and when you need to go outside wear shoes with slip resistant, good grip soles. Wearing suitable clothing inside and outside of the home along with keeping your heating at least 18°C in winter reduces the risks to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing.

“Older neighbours, relatives, friends and other elderly members of the community are more vulnerable in the winter months and may need a bit of extra help this winter, so make sure you keep in touch, check if they are feeling under the weather, help them stock up on food supplies, make sure they have plenty of warm food and drinks. Also it is important that they have their necessary medication during this spell of bad weather.”

Help Us, Help You Stay Well This Winter. Visit [nhs.uk/staywell](https://www.nhs.uk/staywell) for more information. Follow [#winterready](#) and [#weatheraware](#) on Twitter for winter health advice.

Top tips to keep warm during cold weather:

Keep your home warm, efficiently and safely:

heating your home to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing (see page 40 for full advice).

get your heating system and cooking appliances checked and keep your home well ventilated

use your electric blanket as instructed and get it tested every 3 years

never use a hot water bottle with an electric blanket

do not use a gas cooker or oven to heat your home; it is inefficient and there is a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and this can kill

make sure you have a supply of heating oil or LPG or solid fuel if you are not on mains gas or electricity – to make sure you do not run out in winter

Keep in the warmth by:

fitting draught proofing to seal any gaps around windows and doors

making sure you have loft insulation. And if you have cavity walls, make sure they are insulated too

insulate your hot water cylinder and pipes

draw your curtains at dusk to help keep heat generated inside your rooms

make sure your radiators are not obstructed by furniture or curtains

Look after yourself:

food is a vital source of energy and helps to keep your body warm so have plenty of hot food and drinks

aim to include 5 daily portions of fruit and vegetables. Tinned and frozen vegetables count toward your 5 a day

stock up on tinned and frozen foods so you don't have to go out too much when it's cold or icy

exercise is good for you all year round and it can keep you warm in winter

if possible, try to move around at least once an hour. But remember to speak to your GP before starting any exercise plans

wear lots of thin layers – clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy fibres are particularly good and maintain body heat

wear good-fitting slippers with a good grip indoors and shoes with a good grip outside to prevent trips, slips and falls

make sure you have spare medication in case you are unable to go out

check if you are eligible for inclusion on the priority services register operated by your water and power supplier

Look after others:

check on older neighbours or relatives, especially those living alone or who have serious illnesses to make sure they are safe, warm and well

Get financial support:

there are grants, benefits and sources of advice to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. It's worthwhile claiming all the benefits you are entitled to before winter sets in

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