

Script – Broadcast – Preparing for winter’s toughest punch

INTRO

It’s that time of the year when winter can really show its teeth. For adults, snow – especially the heavy stuff – also means lots of shoveling, which can lead to an assortment of health-related problems if you’re not careful and properly prepared for the winter season.

Among the people at the greatest risk of experiencing potential issues while shoveling are the elderly, people with a history of back problems as well as people who have suffered a heart attack or other serious illness. Henderson says to check with your doctor first if you have any concerns about your health.

(((SOT)))

Amy Henderson, family practice assistant, OSF HealthCare

“Every year, thousands of people end up in an emergency department due to things happening when they’re shoveling snow,” says Amy Henderson, a family practice physician assistant for OSF HealthCare. “These include falls, sometimes people experience heart attacks from extraneous activities, back injuries amongst other things. So, it’s really important to take some caution when you are going to be shoveling snow, and the snow is coming.”

Amy Henderson, family practice assistant, OSF HealthCare

“If a person develops any chest pain, sharp, radiating arm pain, jaw pain, those are all signs and symptoms of a possible heart attack. If those symptoms do not improve with rest after a short amount of time, it’s concerning. My advice would be to seek immediate medical attention if you’re concerned at all about a cardiac event or a heart attack; in this case it’s always good to play it safe than sorry.”

VO

Safety is key when it comes to snow and ice. Henderson suggests wearing the appropriate clothing to stay warm and avoid frostbite. Also, try stretching 5 to 10 minutes before you go out in the cold and stay hydrated.

Other important tips include:

- Lift with your legs, not your back
- Push (don’t) lift the snow
- Stay low to the ground
- Shovel more frequently
- Take breaks if you feel winded
- Be aware of ice
- Go inside to warm up in order to avoid frostbite

The same suggestions apply when using a snow blower. Many people are injured every year by pushing their snow blower, twisting their body or reaching into the snow blower.

TAG

The bottom line when it comes to snow shoveling, Henderson says, is play it safe, take your time and be sure to let your loved ones and friends know what you're up to in the event something does happen. And don't be afraid to ask for help.

Henderson adds that if you really should not be shoveling snow, or you're at higher risk, she recommends trying to find someone else who can do it for you, whether that's a neighbor or a family member.

But if you shovel, before you bundle up and head outside to shovel your driveway, make sure you follow proper safety measures to avoid injury. If you or a loved one experiences severe injury, heart attack, or other medical emergencies while shoveling snow, call 911.