

Holiday Safety

Electric Space Heaters

Cooler temperatures means the use of space heaters at home for many people. Here are some tips to using heaters safely:

- Do not plug space heaters into extension cords or surge protectors
- Buy a heater with a tip-over feature
- Make sure it carries the **Underwriter's Laboratory (UL)** label
- Choose the correct heater for the **job; don't choose a heater that is oversized for the room**
- Choose a heater that has a thermostat that can be controlled
- Keep the heater in a visible location ; never leave unattended
- Keep the heater away from foot traffic and children and pets
- Keep a clear, 3-foot perimeter around the heater
- Inspect it regularly

Fall Hazards

Injuries due to falls increase during the holiday season, with most occurring while standing on a ladder, roof or furniture. Most injuries occurred to people between the ages of 20 and 49, with males 40% more likely than females to be injured. Although home decorating-related falls account for only a small percentage of injuries, most are preventable. Here are some tips to avoid getting hurt this holiday season:

- Choose the correct ladder for the job; know how high you need to reach and how much weight the ladder can accommodate
- Make sure the ladder is placed on level, solid ground
- Make sure the ground is clear from obstructions and is not icy or slippery
- Do not try to extend the height by placing it on top of another object

- Do not climb on the top rung or bucket shelf
- Move and reposition the ladder if needed rather than reaching or leaning
- Only one person at a time should be on a ladder
- Keep three points of contact on the ladder at all times, both hands and one foot or both feet and one hand

Food Preparation

Raw beef and poultry are not the only potential host for bacteria. As shown with the recent outbreak of e. coli in prepackaged romaine lettuce, bacteria can take up residence almost anywhere.

- When possible, rinse fruits and veggies before cutting or consuming.
- Always cook meats to their correct internal temperature (ground meats– 160; steak, roasts, and whole cuts of pork –145 with a 3-minute resting time; poultry– 165)
- Use a thermometer and make sure you put the thermometer in the thickest part of the food, without touching the bone.
- Do not eat raw prepackaged cookie dough or other unbaked bakery goods.
- Do not eat food that contains uncooked flour; a 2016 outbreak of e. coli was linked to flour products
- Avoid foods that have uncooked eggs
- Children, adults with weakened immune systems and the elderly are the most susceptible to food borne diseases.
- Keep slow cookers away from the edge of countertops
- Keep cords away from small hands that can reach and pull down

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Inside this issue:

<i>Flu Info</i>	2
<i>Safety Recalls</i>	2
<i>Navigating Winter</i>	2
<i>Mental Health</i>	3
<i>Diabetes Month</i>	4

Influenza Information

Last year's flu season was the worst on record since 2009, when recordkeeping began. Over four thousand Oklahomans were hospitalized and nearly 300 died as a result of influenza. Children and people over the age of 65 are especially vulnerable to flu complications. Receiving a vaccination not only helps prevent the flu in those vaccinated, it also helps prevent the spread of the virus to other folks.

HealthMap Vaccine Finder is a free, online service that can help users find the closest immunization/vaccination location to them. Click [here](#) to access HealthMap Vaccine Finder.

If you contract the flu or suspect you may have, call your healthcare provider. You may be able to obtain antiviral medications that can lessen symptoms if the virus is caught early enough. Other things to do if you have the flu:

- Wash your hands frequently to help stop the spread of the virus
- Dispose of tissues immediately
- Stay home if you are sick and remain home until 24 hours after your fever passes
- If you experience any [unusual symptoms](#) such as trouble breathing, dehydration, pain, or vomiting, see your doctor immediately

Recent Safety Recalls

VH101 Personal Vortex electric space heaters

Brookstone Wireless Speakers

Eddie Bauer fabric infant carriers

All-Pro and Defiant solar-powered outdoor LED light fixtures

Yamaha golf cars, personal transportation and specialty vehicles

For more details on these and other recalls, see the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission [website](#)

Navigating Winter Conditions

Frozen precipitation and parking lots can create conditions for slips and falls. Here are some tips to reduce the risk of injury in parking lots and sidewalks:

- Keep walkways and sidewalks clear of leaves and other debris.
- If possible, sprinkle salt or sand on frequently used walkways before precipitation freezes.
- Slips can occur inside as a result of slippery interior floors. Use entrance mats in entryways and post signs indicating slippery or wet surfaces inside lobby areas and near exterior doors.

If you have to walk through an icy parking lot, here are some tips to make it a safer walk:

- Take small, steady steps.
- Slow down. Allow extra time if the conditions are not good.
- Choose appropriate footwear– wear something with a flat or tractioned sole. A set of winter cleats that slip over your regular shoes can be helpful as well.
- Avoid carrying large items and talking on your cell phone or otherwise being distracted.
- Ask for help. Most people are glad to offer assistance helping others across a slippery walkway.

Quarterly Safety Training

The Oklahoma Department of Labor (DOL) requires state agencies to provide quarterly safety training to all employees. The training should be documented with the date, location, course information, trainer/provider information and a list of employees in attendance. Make-up sessions should be provided for those employees who are not able to attend. For more information on the DOL's Workplace Safety and Health Division, click [here](#).

Coping With Depression

One in ten Americans will experience depression at some point in their lives. In Oklahoma, depression is the leading reason for missing work and reduced productivity. Poverty, high incidence of child and domestic abuse, some of the highest incarceration rates in the country and weather-related trauma may be some of the contributing factors in the state.

Like any other illness, depression is treatable and patients experiencing depression can get better. The first steps to improvement are identifying depressive behavior, getting diagnosed, and receiving treatment.

Signs and symptoms of depression:

- Anxiety; apathy; general discontent; hopelessness; fatigue; loss of interest in activities
- Insomnia (including restlessness or not being able to return to sleep) or excessive sleeping
- Lack of concentration, wanting to be alone
- Thoughts of suicide
- Weight gain or weight loss
- Anger and withdrawal, especially in children
- Not wanting to leave home, especially in older persons

Getting Help

- 1) Discuss your feelings of depression with your doctor. An open, honest conversation is important in getting the right kind of help.
- 2) Don't wait— if symptoms are impairing your home or work life, or you are thinking about suicide or self-harm, seek medical advice.
- 3) Reach out if you or someone you know needs help—
 - 211— 24/7 assistance with linking to local providers
 - 1-800— 662-4357 (HELP)- 24/7 free and confidential treatment referral and information about mental health and substance abuse
 - 1-800-273-8255 (TALK)- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides 24/7, free, and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones

[Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator](#)

[Access a listing of Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Certified](#)

ALGEE

ALGEE is a mnemonic device for Mental Health First Aid's 5-step action plan.

Assess for risk or suicide or harm
Look for signs of suicidal thoughts or behaviors

Listen nonjudgmentally
Listening is crucial to help someone feel respected, accepted, and understood

Give reassurance and information
Mental illnesses are real, treatable diseases from which people can and do recover

Encourage appropriate professional help
Doctors, social workers, counselors can help

Encourage self-help and other support strategies
Individuals can contribute to their own recovery with self-care strategies

Click [here](#) for more information on Mental Health First Aid Training

Mental Health First Aid ACTION PLAN



- A**pproach, assess and assist with any crisis
- L**isten non-judgmentally
- G**ive support and information
- E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- E**ncourage other supports

November is National Diabetes Month

[American Diabetes Association](http://www.diabetes.org)

What is diabetes?

- Occurs when blood glucose (blood sugar) is too high.
- Insulin (produced in the pancreas) helps glucose from food get into your cells to be used for energy.
- When the body doesn't produce enough insulin or use it well, glucose levels in the blood stay high.
- Over time, high glucose levels can cause serious health problems.

There are 3 types of diabetes:

- **Type 1:** the body doesn't produce enough insulin; usually diagnosed in children and young adults; people with Type 1 need to take insulin every day to stay alive
- **Type 2:** the body does not make or use insulin well; most often occurs in middle-aged and older people but can develop at any age
- **Gestational diabetes:** occurs in some women when they are pregnant; usually goes away after the baby is born; women who develop gestational diabetes are at greater risk of Type 2 later in life

Symptoms:

- Frequent urination
- Feeling very thirsty and/or hungry
- Extreme fatigue
- Blurry vision
- Cuts/bruises that are slow to heal
- Weight loss, with no explanation
- Tingling, pain, or numbness in hands/feet

Prevalence:

- 9.4 percent of the population had diabetes as of 2015
- Diabetes affects 1 in 4 people over the age of

Health Problems as a Result of Diabetes

If not managed or treated, diabetes can cause:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Kidney disease
- Eye problems
- Dental disease
- Nerve damage
- Foot problems

Prevention is Key:

Lose weight and keep it off

- Just losing 5 to 7% of your starting weight can delay or prevent diabetes.

Exercise

- Study after study has shown that regular exercise can extend lives and prevent disease.
- Start slowly and always consult with your doctor before starting an exercise routine.

Eat healthy

- Choose foods that are low calories, nutrient-rich.
- Stay away from fad food trends and diets.
- Skip sweets, baked goods, candy, ice cream and beverages with added sugar, including juices.
- Choose fruits and vegetables, low fat proteins, dried beans, low fat dairy, and whole grains
- Eating plant proteins, such as beans and legumes, is an excellent way to get both protein and fiber, which can regulate blood sugar levels

