



# Winter Sports Safety

From Nashoba Valley Ski Area and Lowell General Hospital

## Injury Prevention is Key!

Being warm, dry, and in control of your equipment will help make you or your child's skiing, snowboarding, or tubing experience a success.

According to the American Association of Orthopedic Surgeons, the most common ski and snowboarding injuries occur due to loss of control. Know your own ability level, stay within your limits and know how to use your equipment.

*Following these safety recommendations will help keep you and others around you safe this winter season.*

### For Parents:

- Have your child learn "Your Responsibility Code"
- Ski helmets are helpful, but do not give excuse for reckless skiing or riding.
- Be sure your children are wearing a helmet, eye protection and sun-screen.
- Be sure your child carries identification and adult contact information in a zippered pocket.
- Sign your child up for lessons.
- Be sure your child knows when to stop to refuel or warm up.
- Make a meeting place in case of separation from the group or parent.

### Skiing and Snowboarding:

- Be in shape.
- Warm up before activities, including an easy warm-up run.
- Use proper equipment with correct fit.
- Wear protective gear (helmets, goggles).
- Know how to use the equipment.
- Know and follow "Your Responsibility Code".
- Take lessons to improve your technique and ability.
- Take breaks – stay hydrated and warm. If you are tired, take a rest.

### Snow Tubing:

- Never tube head first. Riders should always be sitting and upright.
- Stay in control. Be able to stop or roll off the tube to prevent collision.
- Stay warm and dry. When you begin to feel cold or tired, it is time to head inside to sit by the fire and drink hot cocoa!

## Have Fun! Stay Safe!

Winter sports can be a great way for people of all ages to add variety to exercise, meet new people, and have fun during the cold winter months. Skiing, snowboarding and tubing are uniquely winter activities that nearly anyone can enjoy safely by following some a few rules:

The National Ski Areas Association has put together a few guidelines called "Your Responsibility Code":

- Always stay in control and be able to stop or avoid other people or objects.
- People ahead of you have the right of way. It is your responsibility to avoid them.
- You must not stop where you obstruct a trail, or are not visible from above.
- When starting downhill or merging into a trail, look uphill and yield to others.
- Always use devices to help prevent runaway equipment.
- Observe all posted signs and warnings. Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas.
- Prior to using any lift, you must have the knowledge and ability to load, ride and unload safely.





## Stay Warm!

Staying warm and dry makes for comfort and safety too! Cold muscles contract and are more susceptible to strains and tears. Keeping dry and warm go hand in hand and wearing the right clothing can help.

Cotton is not recommended because it holds moisture close to the skin, cooling rather than warming.

### Layer your clothing

#### Layer 1: Wicking (close to your skin):

Wool, silk or synthetic fiber (like polypropylene) top and bottom draw moisture away from your skin.

#### Layer 2: Insulation

Fleece or wool sweatshirts (a front zipper sweatshirt allows you to easily regulate your temperature).

#### Layer 3: Weatherproofing

Wind and waterproof coats and pants. Outerwear insulated with goose down retains the most heat.

### Head and face

More heat is lost through the head than any other part of the body. A helmet keeps you safe and warm! For hats, fleece or wool are the best choice. Sunscreen prevents sunburn to exposed faces. Sunglasses or goggles protect the eyes from sun and injury.

### Hands and feet

Mittens are warmer than gloves because they keep the fingers together, but either should be made of down or synthetic fiber covered in a water repellent shell. Silk or polypropylene liners can be worn to add warmth. Well fitting wool blend socks, like Smartwool®, keep feet dry and warm.

**Prevention is best – when you or someone you are with feels tired or cold, go in to warm up and rest.**

## In Case of Emergency

### Ski Patrol is here to assist you

For accidents or health concerns on the mountain, alert a member of Ski Patrol. You will find them at the top of the lifts, on the slopes and at the base of the mountain.

### Injury

If you witness an accident, ask the person's name and if they need help. Send another skier or snowboarder to alert the Ski Patrol. If the injury seems serious, do not attempt to move the person. Wait for Ski Patrol personnel and report what you know.

### Frostbite

Occurs when the skin freezes. Hands, feet, nose and ears are the most likely to be frostbit. Skin with frostbite looks hard, pale, and feels cold. As the area thaws, it becomes red and painful. Avoid frostbite by limiting exposed areas, staying dry and warm. If you notice signs of frostbite:

- Get out of the cold.
- Warm the area slowly (don't rub).
- Get medical assistance.

### Hypothermia

Occurs when the body temperature drops to 95° F or lower. Hypothermia causes gradual loss of mental and physical ability, such as slurred speech and confusion. It is dangerous.

- Get out of the cold.
- Get medical attention.

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