

# Combat the cold



CAITLIN HERRINGTON | THE JOURNAL

A sign in Seneca warns drivers of icy conditions on U.S. Highway 123 on Tuesday afternoon. With an overnight low of 23 degrees predicted for tonight, health officials are encouraging residents to bundle up and be wary of hypothermia.

## Expert urges residents to be safe during frigid temperatures

BY CAITLIN HERRINGTON  
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SENECA — With a wind chill dipping into the teens this morning and predicted to remain in the 20s, the medical professionals at Prisma Health-Upstate are reminding everyone to take some cold-weather precautions.

several layers, especially on the extremities, and remove wet clothing once inside.

“If you notice someone who you feel like they’re getting hypothermic, get them into a warm room,” Craig said. “If they have wet clothing on, you want to get that off. You want to warm from the center of their body first with warm water or warm tea.”

For children, the former pediatric nurse said it’s important for parents to remember not to put blankets in their child’s crib.

The cold is typically more dangerous for infants, young children and the elderly, Upstate Family Practice nurse practitioner Lauren Craig said. Hypothermia can happen quickly, so it’s important to know the signs.

“Warning signs would be confusion — especially in older adults — shivering, memory loss, slurred speech and drows-

iness,” Craig said. “Babies who get cold, their skin will get bright red and will be cold to the touch. When the human body temperature gets below 95 (degrees Fahrenheit), it’s a medical emergency.”

Though the Upstate isn’t predicted to get snow, she said it’s important to wear

or submersion in cold water,” she said. “So that’s important if you’re out working in the cold or in

the rain a long period of time. Always take those wet clothes off right away.”

As for frostbite, early signs are pain and redness at the site — usually fingers and toes — and it’s best to warm those up inside with lukewarm water, she said.

“Don’t ever stick your fingers in hot water, because you might burn your hands due to lost feeling,” Craig said.

“You don’t want any pillows or blankets in a crib with babies,” she said. “But definitely make sure you’re putting them to bed in a warm room with good, warm pajamas on.”

When traveling, bring all those extra layers in case of emergency, she said, but don’t put bundled-up children in car seats.

“You don’t want to put them in a car seat with a big, bulky jacket on, because it isn’t as safe,”

Craig said. “Get your car warm before you get in if you can do so safely. Remove the coat when getting in the car, but put it on before going back out in the cold. You don’t want them to be overheated once the heat is on and running.”

It isn’t just freezing temperatures Upstate residents have to worry about, Craig said.

“The CDC says that hypothermia can occur above 40 degrees if a person becomes saturated with rain, sweat

“Lukewarm water is best, but severe cases will require medical attention, and sooner is better.”