

Life, Work & Family

Monthly work/life news for UAW-Represented DaimlerChrysler Workers February 2005

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Cold Weather Tips for Seniors

As the body ages, it becomes less able to respond to temperature fluctuations. In cold weather, some older individuals may develop accidental hypothermia; a drop in body temperature that can, if not detected and treated properly, be fatal.

Accidental hypothermia can occur if an individual is exposed to severe cold without adequate protection. Due to changes in the body as a result of the aging process, some older individuals can develop hypothermia after exposure to relatively mild cold.

A small percentage of seniors, whose temperature regulation is defective, face the greatest danger. For unknown reasons, they do not shiver or feel cold. As a result, they are unable to produce body heat when it is needed.

Some conditions can increase a persons risk for hypothermia. These include:

- Alcohol consumption
- Poor diet
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Some prescription drugs

What you can do:

- Dress warmly inside and outside
- Adopt the "layered" look in your clothing (loose clothes will trap warm air around your body)

When outdoors:

- Wear mittens (they're warmer than gloves)
- Keep socks dry
- Wear a windproof outer layer
- Wear a hat (a lot of body heat escapes from the head)

Because hypothermia may start at night, it is wise to take certain bedtime precautions:

- Layer your bed clothes
- Use several, lightweight blankets instead of one heavy one
- Keep heat at a steady temperature

Finally, make sure you are not at risk of losing heat in your home. Fuel assistance programs have been set up to help older Americans in paying the high cost of fuel.

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7 Ways to Keep Your Family Fit Indoors

Due to cutbacks in physical education, increased academic pressures, busy family lives, and ever-growing portion sizes in restaurants and at home, kids are increasingly overweight. Add to that the bone-chilling winter weather that just makes everyone want to cozy up in front of the TV, and you have a recipe for serious health concerns. Try these strategies to get your family moving – this winter and all year-round.

1. **Start young.** The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) advises parents to get kids moving early in life, to foster healthy development and keep sedentary habits from taking hold. Even your toddler needs at least 30 minutes of structured physical activity every day, and should not sit still (for example, watching television) for more than an hour at a time.
2. **Provide safe indoor gear.** Encourage active play with balls for throwing and rolling (soft, lightweight ones are safe for indoors – try beanbags, foam balls, or beach balls) and scarves for dancing. These activities also support the development of eye-hand coordination.
3. **Pump up dramatic play with props.** Inspire energetic play (and your child's imagination) with extras like medals and trophies for sports games, or music and costumes for dancing. Encourage your child to act out storybooks or give a concert of favorite songs.
4. **Designate an indoor action spot.** If you have room, set aside a portion of your basement or family room for active play. Put up an indoor basketball hoop, tape a hopscotch outline on the floor, or make a track for ride-on toys. No space? Consider pooling resources with a friend or neighbor. She provides the room; you contribute toys and help supervise the kids.
5. **Move every day.** Dancing, housework, and climbing stairs all help you stay fit and don't require extra room or gear. Have your child dance along to a workout tape or just some rockin' tunes, or blast some music and parade through the house playing follow the leader. Try marching, hopping, pumping your arms, playing kazoos – whatever you can dream up!
6. **Find community resources.** Try bowling, ice skating, swimming, or other indoor options. Check whether your child's school, or a local university or community center, offers an "open gym" time, where you can go and shoot hoops or use other equipment.
7. **Be a cheerleader.** In one study of 200 students in grades two through eleven, kids of all ages said they wanted their parents to help them stay active. So whether you join in the games, or shout words of support from the sidelines, show your child that activity is a priority every day.



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Think Summer!

Summer is just around the corner, where will your children be? It's time to start looking into your summer camp options. Summer camp can be a fun and exciting experience for children of all ages. Whether your child is interested in outdoor exploration, sports, drama, or arts and crafts, there are many camp options to choose from.



Look for more summer camp information in the March 2005 issue of the Life, Work & Family newsletter....

What's New

Did you know?

Black history had barely begun to be studied - or even documented – when the tradition of “Black History Month” was originated.

We owe the celebration of Black History Month and more importantly, the study of black history to Dr. Carter G. Woodson. Born to parents who were former slaves, he spent his childhood working in the Kentucky coal mines and enrolled in high school at age twenty. He graduated within two years and later went on to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard. He was disturbed to find in his studies that history books largely ignored the black American population – and when blacks did figure into the picture, it was generally in ways that reflected the inferior social position they were assigned at the time. He decided to take on the challenge of writing black Americans into the nation's history. He established the Association of the Study of Negro Life and History (now called the Association of the Study of Afro-American Life and History) in 1915. In 1926, he launched Negro History Week as an initiative to bring national attention to the contributions of black people throughout American history.

Dr. Woodson chose the second week of February for Negro History Week because it marks the birthdays of two men who greatly influenced the black American population, Frederick Douglas and Abraham Lincoln.

