

# Debunking winter weather myths

January 16 2017

---



(HealthDay)—A hot toddy may seem like a good way to stay toasty on a freezing day because it makes blood rush to your skin's surface. But drinking alcohol actually speeds heat loss, according to experts.

That's just one common myth about winter and [cold weather](#). Separating fact from fiction is key to avoiding cold-related complications like hypothermia and frostbite, researchers at the University of Rochester in New York said.

Here's what they say you need to know:

- Warm clothes don't prevent viral illnesses. More than 200 germs cause the [common cold](#). Bundling up may not help you avoid exposure to one of them.
- Wearing a hat is a good idea when temperatures tumble, but heat escapes from any part of your body that is exposed—not just your head. Heat loss from the head also depends on how thick your hair is and how much energy you burn in the cold. But kids lose much more heat through their heads than adults, so hoods and hats are even more important for little ones.
- Add sensitivity to cold to the differences between men and women. Women get chilled sooner because their bodies begin conserving heat when the temperature is about 70 degrees Fahrenheit, reducing blood flow to their hands and feet. Men don't reach this tipping point until the temperature reaches about 67 degrees.
- If you're active outdoors in cold weather, wearing layers will help you adjust to changing temperatures, but one good sweater will do the job for those who just want to stay warm.

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides more information on [winter weather safety](#).

Copyright © 2017 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: Debunking winter weather myths (2017, January 16) retrieved 18 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-01-debunking-winter-weather-myths.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.