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THE HEALTHY HANDS CENTER

WARM HEARTS, COLD HANDS FOR VALENTINES DAY WEEKEND!

We've gotten a bit lucky to this point. Except for one major snowstorm and a baby one, we've been spared from severe Arctic winds and weather.

But...despite the fact that Punxsutawney Phil, the furry little groundhog weather guy, saw his shadow a week or so ago, our luck may have run out. The 2016 edition of the Old Farmer's Almanac, which came out about the same time, is ready to call Phil on his bluff. They're saying that the worst is yet to come.



But, what about my hands?

And feet...and ears!

Remember, as a matter of survival your body will move (or shunt) blood away from the extremities. The priority is your core temperature. This physiological response results in reduced circulation to finger, toes and earlobes.

The movement of blood away from the "extremities" can result in damage to the skin and deeper tissues that is somewhat analogous to a burn, but instead of heat induced, cold is the villain.

The risk of damage is increased in people who already have poor circulation. This could include people with clogged arteries from atherosclerosis, those who smoke, diabetics and those on certain medications like Beta Blockers. Not to mention wet and poorly fitting clothing or having your arms or legs in weird positions.

Stay thirsty my friend!

But, unlike the Dos Equis Man...don't make it alcohol. While staying well hydrated is important as part of maintaining your circulation, alcohol will play tricks on your body. It may make you feel warm but ultimately, it will lower your core temperature.

May the wind be ever at your back...

Follow the old Irish dictum...and dress warm and smart. Layered and dry clothes, fitting well. If you plan to sweat, certain synthetics will dry faster and better. Mittens may work better than gloves for some people. And... if you don't really need to go out...stay snuggled up and warm inside.

For those of you celebrating...
Happy Valentines Day!

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