

Winter Weather Means Taking Extra Precautions To Prevent Slips And Falls

January 16 2022 7:15 AM



O'FALLON - Winter is here, and snow has already covered many regions of the United States. With the possible snowfall predicted for the region, HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital wants to ensure area residents stay as safe as possible when venturing outdoors.

Slips and falls can cause serious harm as conditions of roads, parking lots, and sidewalks worsen in winter weather. They can cause injuries ranging from minor bruises, cuts, and abrasions to more serious fractures, spinal cord damage, and concussions.

Slipping and falling on ice or snow may seem minor but can really cause serious injury. Whenever someone is outside in colder temperatures where sidewalks or driveway may be slippery, medical experts at HSHS St. Elizabeth's urge everyone to take caution as it can be surprising how much damage taking a fall can do.

Here are some tips to be mindful of over the next few months to avoid slips and falls:

- **Beware of wet, dark areas on the pavement.** There may be thin, hardly visible layers of ice (black ice) on these spots as a result of dew or water vapor freezing. It is best to treat all of these areas as slippery in cold temperatures.
- **Walk slowly and take short strides.** Use handrails when walking up or down steps. Choose well-walked paths and avoid taking shortcuts, since these areas may not be accessible for snow or ice removal.
- **Keep your hands free and extend your arms while walking.** Avoid carrying too much or placing your hands in your pockets. This will keep your center of gravity from decreasing and help to maintain balance.

If you do take a fall and need emergency care, call 911 or visit your nearest emergency room immediately. HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital's emergency department, 1 St. Elizabeth's Blvd. in O'Fallon, IL, is well-prepared to deliver high-quality emergency medical care 24/7.

About Hospital Sisters Health System

Hospital Sisters Health System's (HSHS) mission is to reveal and embody Christ's healing love for all people through our high-quality Franciscan health care ministry. HSHS provides state-of-the-art health care to our patients and is dedicated to serving all people, especially the most vulnerable, at each of our physician practices and 15 local hospitals in two states – Illinois (Breese, Decatur, Effingham, Greenville, Highland, Litchfield, O'Fallon, Shelbyville and Springfield) and Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Oconto Falls, Sheboygan and two in Green Bay). HSHS is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, and [Hospital Sisters of St. Francis](http://www.hshs.org) is the founding institute. For more information about HSHS, visit www.hshs.org. For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit www.hospitalsisters.org.