

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Tips on Winter Walking Safety. In response to the expanding waistlines of its citizens, several Washtenaw County communities have started campaigns to encourage residents to be more active. In support of these efforts, Washtenaw County Health Improvement Plan (HIP) wants to remind everyone that winter weather does not have to mean the end of walking.

To safely enjoy the clear, crisp air of winter, follow these tips from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

- Dress in layers and wear boots with nonskid soles. Wear a bright scarf or hat or reflective gear so drivers can see you.
- Walk on sidewalks if possible. If sidewalks are covered in snow and ice and you must walk in the street, walk against the flow of traffic and as close to the curb as you can. Always keep children--whether in a stroller or on foot--in front of you and as close to the curb as possible
- Don't wear a hat or scarf that blocks your vision or makes it hard for you to hear traffic.
- When traveling with babies or small children, dress them in bright or reflective clothing.
- Before you step off the curb, make sure oncoming cars and trucks have come to a complete stop.

With weather appropriate footwear and warm clothing, there are many trails and walkways in Washtenaw County that are safe year round. Parks that maintain their trails and have free admission include Gallup Park and the Washtenaw County Farm Park, both located in Ann Arbor, as well as Washtenaw County's Rolling Hills County Park in Ypsilanti, and Dexter's Hudson Mills Metro Park, which have small entrance fees. Other local park trails, although not maintained, are often open to the public all year and have enough foot traffic to keep them safe and walkable, call a park close to you for more details. The downtown areas of Washtenaw County cities and villages are also safe choices for winter walking with clear, well-lit sidewalks (and a place to stop for a warm drink!)

If you prefer warmer walking locations, Briarwood Mall is open to the public at 7:00 AM for walkers. Indoor tracks can be found at the Meri Lou Murray Recreation Facility in Ann Arbor, the

Saline Recreation Complex, and many local gyms. Your local high school may also be open after classes for the public to walk the halls, call your local administration office for details.

Coordinated by Washtenaw County Public Health, HIP is an ongoing partnership of numerous health systems, community agencies, coalitions and individuals working together to improve the health of Washtenaw County residents. For a more extensive list of walking resources and more information on HIP, visit [http:// hip.ewashtenaw.org](http://hip.ewashtenaw.org).