

Extension

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Go Outside and Have Some fun!

By Sheila Gains, Family and Consumer Science Agent Arapahoe County

Burr, it's cold out there, but you need to burn off some post holiday calories and your kids need to burn off some energy before you all go crazy! Here are some ideas to get you outside and active.

Consider the snow a piece of playground equipment and get ready for action.

Even if you only have a little snow you can make Snow Angels. Lie in the snow on your back and swish legs and arms back and forth to make an angel shape in the snow.

If you have enough snow, make a Snowman. Children of all ages can help roll the snowballs and create faces from twigs, leaves or stones. Adults can help stack the snow balls, two, three or more high.

Build a Snow Fort or Snow House by stacking snow balls or snow chunks to form walls. Everyone can work together to help build a big fort/house. Each child can build their own room within a larger fort/house.

If the snow is not too deep go for a Snow Hike. Dress in warm layers, incase you get too warm burning those calories. If you have young children, take a snow hike around the neighborhood. Look for places that animals might live: in trees, under porches, in special houses, on the ground, or in the ground. Ask children to predict what type of animal might live in each place and talk about what the animal might eat during the winter.

Start a friendly game of Snow Tag. Snow boots and warm clothing layers are needed for this activity. Make a large circle in the snow with spokes going from one side to the other. Play a game where children must stay on the stamped out paths.

If you have lots of snow Build an Igloo. Round up a few snow shovels, big and small. Find a snow pile made from plowing or shoveling show. Dig an "igloo" into it, or make a snow tunnel all the way through the pile. Compare it to a real house or an animal's den.

Benefits of playing in the snow:

- Practice large motor skills
- Improved spatial awareness
- Body awareness
- Following rules



Let's Talk:

Be a role model, take daily breaks to get outside. If it's dark in the evening and that's the only time you have to be active, take a special moonlight or flashlight hike or game of moonlight tag. Be careful in really cold weather, and at night when it's the coldest. Limit outside play to 10-15 minutes at a time to avoid the risks of frost bite. If it is just too cold, stay inside and have a dance party.

Recipe for Health:

Hot Cocoa Mix

**Have plenty of Hot Cocoa Mix on hand to warm up your outdoor adventures!
Makes approximately 14 servings**



Ingredients:

- 3 cups nonfat dry milk powder
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- ½ cup nonfat dairy creamer
- ½ cup sugar

Optional ingredients for flavor variations: crushed peppermint stick, ground cinnamon, or instant coffee.

Directions

1. Measure ingredients into a large bowl. Mix well.
2. Store prepared mix in a covered container or in a reclosable plastic bag.
3. Stir ¼ cup Hot Coca Mix into ¾ cup of hot water to make one serving.
4. Optional, add a few fresh marshmallows.

For a satisfying snack, serve with graham crackers or whole grain crackers and low-fat cheese.