

Outside and Colds in Cold Weather

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Children do not catch a cold from being outside in the cold... it's a myth, research shows you're safer from colds when you're outside than when you're inside!

The increasing level of illness that accompanies the colder months has left many parents to believe that the cold weather has given their kids a cold. It's in the name, isn't it? A cold? – Charlie Elizabeth Culverhouse 3/02/2024 NEWS/ Nursery World

“Children do not ‘catch a cold’ by playing outside during the Winter,” Adrian Preuss, a Nutrition Scientist states. “Research confirms that the opposite is true, and children who spend time outside get less sick, backed by evidence. So please allow your kids to play outside to boost their immune defence.” Quote shared by Adrian Preuss (@nourishherbody)

Child Care Health Consultant Anne Dodds is just one of many experts praising the benefits of winter play alongside Preuss., “Winter fresh air is good for everyone! Outdoor winter play has long been blamed for colds and the flu. Our parents told us to ‘bundle up or you’ll catch a cold,’ and their parents probably told them the same thing.

“Although going outside unprepared for the elements is unwise, viruses that are spread by other human beings and cause colds and the flu are indoors. The indoor circulation of germs and bacteria is much more harmful to your child than playing outside.”

Many Health professionals from within the NHS and beyond are promoting the importance of being outside in all weathers as long as you are dressed appropriately. Being outside helps build immunity and reduces the risk of catching germs. There are more benefits to Health for being outdoors than there are for being Indoors.

The DFE (Department for Education) states that during cold adverse weather early years setting should:

- Ventilate indoor spaces, especially those where people gather, even for short periods each day to help reduce the risk of spread of infection.
- Encourage children to move more and be physically active.
- Promote vaccination for flu for children to help reduce risks from respiratory infections during the winter and encouraging parents and carers to keep their children up to date with routine immunisations.
- Reinforcing public health messages around hand washing and respiratory hygiene and taking other steps to prevent the spread of infections during the winter such as opening windows and going outdoors where possible.
- Provide advice on appropriate clothing for adverse cold weather, ice or snow to families
- providing parents with information on children attending school or early years settings when ill.
- Make sure rooms are not too hot as hot rooms increase the risk of germs and also cause children especially babies to overheat.