

# Take 5 for Safety

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**BROOKHAVEN**  
NATIONAL LABORATORY

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# Tips on How to Safely Shovel Snow

- **Be aware of the dangers of hypothermia.** Heart failure causes most deaths in hypothermia. To prevent hypothermia, dress in layers of warm clothing, which traps air between layers forming a protective insulation. Wear a hat because much of your body's heat can be lost through your head.
- **Consult a doctor.** If you have a medical condition, don't exercise on a regular basis or are middle aged or older, meet with your doctor prior to exercising in cold weather.

# Tips on How to Safely Shovel Snow

- **Give yourself a break.** Take frequent rest breaks during shoveling so you don't overstress your heart. Pay attention to how your body feels during those breaks.
- **Don't eat a heavy meal prior or soon after shoveling.** Eating a large meal can put an extra load on your heart.
- **Use a small shovel or consider a snow blower.** The act of lifting heavy snow can raise blood pressure acutely during the lift. It is safer to lift smaller amounts more times, than to lug a few huge shovelfuls of snow. When possible, simply push the snow.

# Look for Hazards in Every Direction

