



Winter Warmers

When the cold weather is upon us, it's time to think about ways to keep the children warm. Poor circulation (movement of blood around the body) and an inability to exercise to keep warm is a problem for many children with a single ventricle heart condition. Often their feet and hands feel like ice and their lips go blue very quickly when the weather is cold.

In these days of centrally heated houses many of us don't think of the simple ways to keep warm so here are some ideas of how to keep those noses from catching frostbite.

- Pile on the clothes. Lots of thinner layers are better than one thick one, as they trap, and warm, air. Go back to buying vests; lots of shops have good thermal ones for children. Put tights on under trousers and put socks on top. Yes even on the boys. Batman wears tights! Find a hat with earflaps and nice thermal gloves. Try the local ski shop, they have gear especially designed for very cold weather.

Gill Cloke says "Michael hates wearing gloves! I had to resort to the old remedy of long string/ribbon attached to each & through the coat sleeves; this helps with losing them but doesn't solve the problem of how much he hates wearing them in the first place. The problem is he can't keep hold of Brum/Thomas/Lightning Macqueen when he's got his mitts on...! The only way round it we found was to either get Thomas gloves (and we promptly lost one); or to make a a character - I did try making a very basic puppet on a green pair - a few felt triangles up the back and a couple of eyes - and he quite likes his dragons. Though I suspect he would always prefer to be without, basically (and his hands do go black....)

So the other remedy is a buggy-bag with a big front pocket - in which you can put both hands AND Brum! We were very lucky and given a lovely fleecy buggy-bag with a big pocket, but it would be relatively easy to sew a flap on the front I would imagine. I am better at persuading Michael that Brum/Thomas is cold and needs to stay warm in the pocket than at persuading him to keep his gloves on..."

- Warm up from the inside. Have hot cereal for breakfast; warm the morning drink of milk. Make hot chocolate or tea for snack time. Have soup with a sandwich for lunch and plan warm snacks throughout the day. Remember that your children need little and often so you'll be helping their diet and keeping them warm.

"Our family are quite big porridge eaters anyway, which made it quite funny when Matthew's nursery class were doing Goldilocks and the Three Bears. They all had a taste of porridge, which didn't go down too well with most of the little ones, but, in true Goldilocks style, Matthew ate it all up because it was 'just right'!"

Isabel Baumber

- Cover those noses. Remember scarves or a balaclava can help keep those noses warm.
- Snug in bed. All in one nightclothes with extra socks can help when the duvet slips, many catalogues have all in one suits for older children. If it's really cold, how about using a sleeping bag.

"My personal 'obsession' is keeping Matthew warm in bed. Ever since he was a baby, he has gone extremely cold when he is deeply asleep at night. When he was a baby, I made some sleeping bags (Grobag style) from fleecy fabric with long sleeves and gloves on. Now he's bigger, we have bought a goose down duvet (his duvet was probably more expensive than all the rest of the family's bedding put together!), and I have put fabric flaps on all his duvet covers so they tuck in".

Isabel Baumber

- Sore lips. Prevent sore lips by using lip balm or simple Vaseline.
- Runny noses. If a runny nose persists, seek advice from your health visitor or the G.P. It might develop into an infection.

If you have any other ideas let us know.

Suzie Hutchinson
Chief Executive - LHM

Idea

Sprinkles on porridge!

Gill says "one of our first really successful 'lumpies' was pink and purple porridge, with coloured sprinkles - encourage them to eat the first layer, then sprinkle again!"