



Cold Weather Precautions: HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia is a decrease in the core body temperature to a level at which normal muscular and brain functions are impaired.

Conditions Leading to Hypothermia

- Cold temperatures
- Improper clothing and/or wet clothing and equipment
- Fatigue, exhaustion
- Dehydration and/or poor food intake
- Alcohol intake -causes dilation of blood vessels leading to increased heat loss

What are the signs of hypothermia?

Watch for changes and slowing of brain function:

- Fumbling around for things, falling or unsteady, not able to find the right words.
- Uncontrollable shivering
- Slurred speech
- Irrational behavior
- Pale skin and decreased pulse rate

Treatment

- Reduce heat loss by adding layers of dry clothing and find shelter
- Call emergency help if needed
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine and tobacco/nicotine

Frostbite When the skin or other tissue is exposed to cold temperatures, frostbite may occur. Exposure to extreme cold and wind, for a long period, increases the risk of cold injuries and frostbite.

What are the signs of frostbite?

	Cold Response	Mild Frostbite	Superficial Frostbite	Deep Frostbite
Sensation	Painful	May have sensation	Numb	Numb
Feels	Normal	Normal	Soft	Hard
Color	Red	White	White	White

Prevention is the key.

- Wear warm multilayered, loose fitting dry clothes
- Wear a hat and gloves
- Avoid high, windy areas
- Stay warm through activities
- If you get wet, dry off quickly and change clothes

What is the treatment for frostbite?

- Move person to a warmer area.
- Remove wet clothing and constricting jewelry

- Re-warm area in warm -104° (never hot) water, DO NOT RUB the area.
- Use warm cloths to involved areas (nose, ears) for 20 minutes.
- Apply dry, sterile dressing to frostbitten areas.
- Wrap each finger and toe separately.