

Extreme Cold

Cold weather puts extra strain on the heart as the body tries to keep warm. Anyone performing hard work in the cold should take breaks regularly. Because the body is already working hard just to stay warm, it is possible to be overheated as well. Try to stay indoors when weather is extremely cold, especially if winds are high. If you must go outdoors, make trips outside as brief as possible.

When going outside during very cold weather, adults and children should wear:

- a hat
- a scarf or knit mask to cover face and mouth
- sleeves that are snug at the wrist
- insulated and waterproof mittens or gloves
- several layers of loose-fitting, thermal wear or material that “wicks” moisture off the skin
- a water-resistant or tightly woven coat
- two layers of socks with boots or shoes that are waterproof and have a flexible sole

Frostbite

Frostbite freezes the skin and can result in loss of feeling and even amputation. The risk of frostbite increases for those with poor blood circulation and people who are not dressed properly for the extremely cold temperatures.

To treat frostbite:

- Get the person indoors or to a warm place and remove any wet clothing
- Do not re-warm the skin unless it can be kept warm; warming then re-exposing the area can worsen the damage
- Do not use direct heat from heating pads, radiators or fires.
- Do not rub or massage the skin
- Bandage the area with loose sterile dressing, using gauze or cotton balls to separate fingers and toes
- Call 9-1-1

Hypothermia

Colder temperatures can cause hypothermia, a condition where the human body is at an abnormally low temperature. The condition affects the brain and someone

suffering from hypothermia may not realize what is happening nor do anything about it.

To treat hypothermia:

- Get the person indoors and remove wet clothing
- Warm their trunk slowly first, not hands and feet; warming the extremities may cause shock
- If using hot water bottles or hot packs, wrap them in cloth; do not apply directly to the skin
- Give the person a warm drink avoiding caffeine or alcohol