

What are YOU gonna do about...

COLD-RELATED ILLNESSES?

FROSTBITE

Frostbite (or frostnip which is the early stages of frostbite) is when certain parts of your body are exposed to severe or extreme cold - mainly your fingers, toes, ears, cheeks and nose. Freezing temperatures can form ice crystals in the fluids in and around cells in your body. This damages and dries out cell tissues and membranes, and extreme cases can impact deep nerves, muscles or even bones... or even lead to the loss of a limb.

Things to watch for...

Skin appears white and waxy
Numbness or no feeling in that area
Possible blisters

What to do...

- Handle area gently; DO NOT rub it!
- Remove tight or constrictive clothing (gloves, boots, socks, etc.) and any jewelry.
- Warm gently using body heat or soaking area in warm water (between 100-105 degrees Fahrenheit / between 38-41 degrees Celsius) until area is red and feels warm. *(Person may feel a burning sensation or pain as the area warms back up.)*
- Loosely bandage area with dry, sterile dressing or cloth.
- If fingers or toes are frostbitten, separate them with sterile gauze or clean cloth.
- Try not to break any blisters.

Things you should NOT do...

- DO NOT rub or massage the area since this may cause damage to cells!
- DO NOT rub snow on the area!
- DO NOT try to warm with dry radiant heat (meaning don't warm with a blow-dryer or hold in front of fire or hot stove). Using warm water is best.
- DO NOT try to thaw a frostbitten body part if it has a chance of re-freezing (if you are stuck in the wilderness) since this could cause more damage.

HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia starts setting in when your body core (the vital organs - heart, lungs, and kidneys) drops below 95 degrees Fahrenheit (35 degrees Celsius). When exposed to extreme cold for a long time, your brain begins to shut down certain bodily functions to save internal heat for the core.

Things to watch for...

Shivering and numbness

Confusion or dizziness

Stumbling and weakness

Slow or slurred speech

Shock (pale, cold or clammy, weak or rapid pulse, etc.)

What to do...

- Gently move victim to a warm place.
- Check breathing and pulse (**ABCs... Airway, Breathing, & Circulation**).
- Handle victim gently and **DO NOT** rub body or limbs.
- Remove any wet clothing and replace with dry clothing and/or blankets.
- If possible, place victim in a sleeping bag, especially if in the wilderness. (Note: Your body heat can help heat victim... so cuddle up - if victim says it's okay!)
- Cover the head and neck with a hat or part of a blanket (some body heat is lost through the top of the head).
- **DO NOT WARM VICTIM TOO QUICKLY**, such as putting them in warm water! (If the body warms too fast, it can dump cold blood into the heart and body core causing a possible heart attack or drop in body temperature.)
- If hot water bottles or hot packs are used, wrap in a towel or blanket first then place on side of the chest or on groin (hip) area. (If heat is put on arms or legs then blood could be drawn away from body core - keep heat on the core!)
- Let victim sip a warm, sweet, nonalcoholic drink.
- Keep watching victim's **ABCs...**

Things you should NOT do...

- **DO NOT** rub or massage the victims limbs!
- **DO NOT** put victim in a hot bath! It will warm him/her **TOO** quickly.
- **DO NOT** put hot packs on arms or legs... put them against the body (chest or groin area).