

COMMITMENT

To Safety

HYPOTHERMIA

Signs, Symptoms, Course of Action

When exposed to cold temperatures, you can be at risk of hypothermia – when body temperature drops even a few degrees below its normal temperature of 98.6F. Blood vessels constrict decreasing blood flow to reduce heat loss from the surface of the skin. Body temperature that is too low affects the brain making the victim unable to think clearly or move well and can be a potentially fatal condition.

The four environmental conditions that cause cold-related stress are

1. Low Temperatures
2. High/cool winds
3. Dampness
4. Cold Water

Characteristics of Hypothermia:

Uncontrollable Shivering
Frequent Stumbling
Exhaustion

Slow or Slurred Speech
Fumbling Hands

Memory Lapses
Drowsiness

WHAT DO TO

- Take the person's temperature / if BELOW 95 the situation is an EMERGENCY / SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY
- Begin WARMING the person immediately ... get the victim into a warm room or shelter
- Remove any wet clothing
- Warm the CENTER of the BODY FIRST (chest, neck, head, groin) using an electric blanket if available or skin-to-skin contact under loose, dry layers of blankets, clothing, towels or sheets
- Warm beverages can help increase body temperature – NO ALCOHOL – do NOT give beverages to an unconscious person

UNCONSCIOUS:

- Handle the victim gently and get emergency medical assistance immediately
- CPA should be administered – even if the person appears deceased – and continue CPR while the victim is being warmed

Source: Safety Online / Center for Disease Control