

Hypothermia and Frost Bite Prevention



BOX BUTTE
GENERAL HOSPITAL

Hypothermia occurs when a person's body temperature is below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Children, the very old, those on certain prescription medication, and those that abuse alcohol & illicit drugs are at increased risk for hypothermia and /or frost bite during cold weather. Signs of hypothermia include shivering, slurred speech, lack of coordination, weakness, confusion, drowsiness, shallow breathing, loss of consciousness and even paradoxical undressing.

In extreme cases of hypothermia, loss of consciousness and even paradoxical undressing may occur.



Preventing Hypothermia:

- Check the weather before you go outside, if it's too cold stay inside.
- Set limits on the amount of time spent outside in cold weather.
- Dress in several layers.
- Wear mittens (instead of gloves) and a warm hat.
- Avoid activities that make you sweat. Cold weather and wet clothing cause rapid heat loss.
- Try to keep your clothes dry and stay dry.

Frost Bite

Frostbite occurs when skin and underlying tissues become so cold that they freeze. Common locations of frost bite include the facial cheeks, nose, chin, ears, hands/fingers, and feet/toes. As temperatures and wind chill nears zero and colder, the time required for frostbite to occur decreases.

Signs and symptoms include:

- Cold skin,
- Painful extremities
- Numbness in extremities
- Red, white, blueish-white, or greyish-yellow skin color.
- Hard or waxy looking skin.
- Clumsiness due to joint & muscle stiffness.
- Blistering after re-warming

Prevention of Frostbite

- Limit time spent in the extreme cold weather.
- Stay dry
- Dress in several layers of clothing
- Wear mittens (instead of gloves)
- Wear socks that fit well and provide insulation.
- Watch for signs of frostbite.
- Don't drink alcohol.
- Stay hydrated.
- Keep moving; don't remain still for prolonged periods of time.

If you suspect you or someone you know may have frost bite, seek medical attention as soon as possible.