

Ocean In Motion

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OCEAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Extreme COLD



When winter temperatures drop significantly below normal, staying warm and safe can become a challenge.

What is Extreme Cold?

In regions unaccustomed to winter weather, near freezing temperatures are considered “extreme cold.” Whenever temperatures drop below normal and wind speed increases, heat can leave your body more rapidly. These weather-related conditions may lead to serious health problems. Extreme cold is a dangerous situation that can bring on health-related emergencies.

Outdoor Safety

Whenever the weather is extremely cold, and especially if there are high winds (see [wind chill](#)), try to stay indoors. Make any trips outside as brief as possible and remember these tips to protect your health and safety:

Dress Warm and Stay Dry

Adults & Children should wear:

- Hat
- Scarf or knit mask
- Sleeves that are snug at the wrist
- Mittens (with grippers)
- Water-resistant coat and boots
- Several layers of loose-fitting clothing

Be sure the outer layer of your clothing is tightly woven, preferably wind resistant, to reduce body-heat loss caused by wind. Wool, silk or polypropylene inner layers of clothing will hold more body heat than cotton. Try your best to stay dry as wet clothing and excess perspiration increases heat loss.

Do not ignore shivering, its an important first sign that the body is losing heat. Persistent shivering is a signal to return indoors.

Cold Weather Emergencies

The most common cold-related problems are [hypothermia](#) and [frostbite](#).

Hypothermia

Prolonged exposure to cold will eventually use up your body’s stored energy resulting in hypothermia or abnormally low body temperature. Body temperature that is too low affects the brain, making the victim unable to think clearly or move well.

Hypothermia is most likely at very cold temperatures, but it can occur even at cool temperatures (above 40°F) if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat or submersion in cold water.

Warning Signs of Hypothermia:

- Shivering, exhaustion
- Confusion, fumbling hands
- Memory loss, slurred speech
- Drowsiness

What to Do

If you notice any of these signs, take the person’s temperature. If it is below 95°F, the situation is an emergency, get medical attention immediately.

If medical care is not available, begin warming the person as follows:

- Get the person into a warm room or shelter
- If the victim has on any wet clothing, remove it
- Warm the center of the body first (chest, neck, head and groin). Use skin-to-skin contact under loose, dry layers of blankets, clothing, towels or sheets
- Warm beverages can help increase the body temperature
- After the body temperature has increased, keep the person dry and wrapped in a warm blanket, including the head and neck
- Get medical attention as soon as possible

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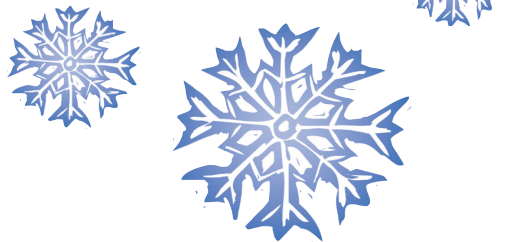
Warren Wolf

Cold Weather Emergencies (Part II)

Frostbite

Frostbite is an injury to the body that is caused by freezing. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and color in affected areas. It most often affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers or toes. The risk of frostbite is increased in people with reduced blood circulation and among people who are not dressed properly for extremely cold temperatures.

If you detect any symptoms of frostbite (see chart to right), seek medical care. Because frostbite and hypothermia both result from exposure to cold weather, first determine whether the victim also shows signs of hypothermia.



Warning Signs of Frostbite

- A white or grayish-yellow skin area
- Skin that feels unusually firm or waxy
- Numbness

What to Do

If there is frostbite and immediate medical care is not available, follow these steps:

- Get into a warm room as soon as possible
- Unless absolutely necessary, do not walk on frostbitten feet or toes
- Place the affected area in warm, not hot, water (You can also use body heat to warm the area)
- Do not rub or massage the frostbitten area
- Do not use a heating pad, heat lamp, fireplace or radiator for warming. Affected areas are numb and can be easily burned

Passing on Healthy Habits to Your Children

The best time to start teaching healthy habits to your children is when they are young, before unhealthy choices become bad habits.

What can you do as a parent?

- Pay attention to the kinds of foods you buy. Limit the amount of "junk food" your kids eat
- Serve a variety of healthy foods and use appropriate portion sizes
- Encourage your child to drink plenty of water or milk instead of sugary fruit drinks (drinks that are not 100% fruit) and soda

- Limit the amount of time your children spend watching television, playing video games or using the computer
- Make physical activity part of your family's routine. Encourage your children to participate in extracurricular activities

When you pass on healthy habits to your kids, it's important to practice what you preach. Just telling your kids what to do won't work—they need to see you practicing healthy behaviors too!



Wear Red February, 2nd

to support women and their fight against heart disease,
click [here](#) for more information

