HYPOTHERMIA Factsheet

What is hypothermia?

- Hypothermia is caused by prolonged exposures to very cold temperatures.
- When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than heat is produced and will use up your body's stored energy, which leads to lower body temperature.
- While hypothermia is most likely to occur at very cold temperatures, it can occur even at cool temperatures (above 40°F) if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat, or submersion in cold water.

Who's most at risk?

- Older adults with inadequate food, clothing, or heating
- Babies sleeping in cold bedrooms
- People who remain outdoors for long periods—the homeless, hikers, hunters, etc.
- People who drink alcohol or use illicit drugs.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Adults

- Shivering
- Exhaustion or feeling very tired
- Confusion
- Fumbling hands
- Memory loss
- Slurred speech
- Drowsiness

Babies

- Bright red, cold skin
- Very low energy

What to do if you notice someone experiencing hypothermia

- **Hypothermia is a medical emergency, get medical attention right away!**
- **If you are not able to get medical help right away, try to warm the person up.**
  - Get the person into a warm room or shelter.
  - Remove any wet clothing the person is wearing.
  - Warm the center of the person's body
  - Warm drinks can help increase body temperature, but do not give alcoholic drinks.
  - After body temperature has increased, keep the person dry and wrap their body, including their head and neck, in a warm blanket.
  - Get the person proper medical attention as soon as possible.

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