

Preventing and Treating Frostbite and Hypothermia

From the National Safety Council: Recognizing the symptoms of frostbite and hypothermia

Prolonged exposure to bitterly cold temperatures increases the risk of developing frostbite.

When exposed to severe cold, **frostbite** can occur in the hands and feet. Severe frostbite is characterized by waxy, pale skin that feels solid, and blisters may develop. With superficial frostbite, the skin will appear white, waxy or grayish-yellow and will feel stiff, cold and numb.

In **hypothermia**, the body's temperature drops below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Watch for these symptoms: changes in one's mental state, shivering uncontrollably, a cool stomach, and low body temperature. In severe cases, symptoms include rigid muscles, dark and puffy skin, irregular heart and respiratory rates, and unconsciousness.

Frostbite and hypothermia both call for fast action: first, getting out of the cold and indoors or to a shelter, and seeking immediate medical attention in severe cases.



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