

Severe Cold Weather Tips and Resources

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Exposure to cold temperatures can cause serious or life-threatening health problems. The most common cold-related problems are hypothermia and frostbite.

The following information is from Winter Weather and Extreme Cold: <https://www.cdc.gov/winter-weather/about/index.html>

HYPOTHERMIA

When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced. Prolonged exposure to cold will eventually use up your body's stored energy. The result is hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature.

Warning signs of hypothermia in adults include shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech and drowsiness.

Warning signs of hypothermia in infants include bright red, cold skin and very low energy.

If you notice any of these signs, take the person's temperature. If it is below 95 degrees, get medical attention immediately.

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. Frostbite can permanently damage the body, and severe cases can lead to amputation.

At the first signs of redness or pain in any skin area, get out of the cold or protect any exposed skin. Other signs of frostbite include a white or grayish-yellow skin area, skin that feels unusually firm or waxy, and numbness.

Protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia by wearing a hat, a scarf or knit mask to cover face and mouth, sleeves that are snug at the wrist, mittens (they are warmer than gloves), water-resistant coat and boots, several layers of loose-fitting clothing.

ANIMAL SAFETY

Humans aren't the only ones affected by harsh weather. When extremely cold temperatures hit, bring pets/companion animals inside, if possible.

For more information go to: <https://www.aspca.org/news/winter-here-protect-your-pets-season-these-tips>

RELATED ELIBRARY PAPERS

- Winter Storms and Blizzards: <https://uwc.211ct.org/winter-storms-and-blizzards/>
- Carbon Monoxide: <https://uwc.211ct.org/carbon-monoxide-co/>



OTHER RESOURCES:

- Connecticut Department of Public Health – “Cold Weather Tips”:
<https://portal.ct.gov/dph/Communications/Crisis-and-Emergency-Risk-Communication/Cold-Weather>
 - Keep Safe from Arctic Chill with Red Cross Tips:
<https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/Cold-Weather-Calls-for-Special-Safety-Steps.html>
 - FEMA – Winter Storms and Extreme Cold:
<https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>
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SOURCES: Extreme Cold, A Prevention Guide to Promote Your Personal Health and Safety, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, American Red Cross, FEMA, and ASPCA

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