

Know the FACTS

Preventing Hypothermia

Hypothermia occurs when exposure to cold weather or wet conditions causes the body to lose heat faster than it can produce it, lowering body temperature to dangerous levels. This can impair thinking and movement, making it harder for a person to recognize they are in danger.

How to prevent hypothermia

When the weather is extremely cold, try to stay indoors. If you must go out, **dress in warm layers** and know who is at high risk for hypothermia. When going outside, cover your ears, nose, chin, cheeks, toes and fingers. Avoid drinking alcohol when outdoors in cold weather.

People at risk include:

- older adults with inadequate food, clothing or heating
- babies sleeping in cold bedrooms
- people who remain outdoors for long periods of time
- people who drink alcohol or use illicit drugs
- people who have pre-existing conditions or are taking certain prescription medications



Signs of hypothermia

The following are warning signs of hypothermia:

- shivering
- exhaustion or fatigue
- confusion
- fumbling hands
- memory loss
- slurred speech
- drowsiness

Treating hypothermia

If a person is experiencing hypothermia:

- seek medical attention immediately.
- get them to a warm room or shelter.
- remove any wet clothing.
- warm them under layers of dry clothing and blankets.
- give them a warm, non-alcoholic beverage.
- avoid direct skin contact to prevent low-temperature burns when using hand warmers.

Additional resources

- **Ohio Department of Health:**
bit.ly/ODHWinterSafety
- **Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC):**
bit.ly/CDCWinterPrevention