

## Signs and Symptoms of Cold Illnesses

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### **Frostnip:**

A mild form of frostbite where only the skin freezes. Skin appears yellowish or white, but feels soft to the touch. You may also experience a painful tingling or burning sensation.

### **Treatment:**

Get out of the cold. Warm the affected area slowly with body heat. Try blowing warm breath onto the affected area or tucking your hands into your armpits. Once the affected area is warm, do not re-expose it to the cold. Never rub or massage the affected area.

### **Frostbite:**

A more severe condition where both the skin and the underlying tissue (e.g. fat, muscle, bone) are frozen. Symptoms include swelling and redness in the early stages, a tingling and burning sensation in the extremities, and numbness. Skin becomes white and waxy greyish-yellow and is hard to the touch.

### **Treatment:**

Frostbite can be a serious medical emergency, so get medical help. If possible, move the victim to a warm area. Loosen or remove tight clothing or jewelry that may restrict circulation. Warm the affected area slowly. If there is a possibility the affected area could be refrozen before medical help arrives, do not warm as this greatly increases the risk of tissue damage. **DO NOT** allow the victim to drink alcohol or smoke.

### **Hypothermia:**

Feeling cold for a prolonged period of time can cause a drop in body temperature. Symptoms include drowsiness, shivering, irritability, confusion, stiff muscles, slurred speech, fatigue, discoloration of lips, cold skin, and apathy. This can progress to a life-threatening condition where shivering stops, the person loses consciousness and potentially cardiac arrest.

### **Treatment:**

Get medical help immediately. Move the person indoors and remove any wet clothing. Place the victim between blankets so the body temperature can rise gradually. Body-to-body contact can help warm the person's temperature slowly. **DO NOT** use hot water bottles or electric blankets. If the person appears unconscious, call 911 and start CPR if necessary.