



When winter winds howl, you hear warnings about the wind chill factor. Wind chill shows how cold the wind makes exposed flesh feel and is a good indication of how much danger you face of frostbite or hypothermia. The lower the chill factor, the more you should bundle up.

## Extreme Cold ...

Two dangers of becoming too cold are **hypothermia** and **frostbite**.

**Frostbite** If skin becomes cold enough, it can actually freeze. When that happens, ice crystals form and damage tissue. This is frostbite. Ears, nose, hands, and feet are the most vulnerable. The defense is to be aware of the danger when it's bitterly cold, especially when the wind is blowing. Mittens, hats, a warm covering for the face, and warm dry socks can keep frostbite away.

**Hypothermia** When core body temperature drops below about 95 degrees F, a person becomes

confused and disoriented. At first shivering is violent; but as the temperature falls, shivering decreases. The result can be unconsciousness and possibly death.

It isn't necessary to have bitter cold to have hypothermia. People who are very old or very young are more vulnerable because the body is less able to regulate its temperature.

A good defense is to wear wool, not cotton, clothing. When cotton gets wet, it draws heat away from the body. Wool continues to insulate the body even when it's wet.

## Hypothermia Can Be Fatal



### Stages Of Hypothermia

1. Shivering - a response by the body which generates heat
2. Apathy and decreased muscle function, first fine motor and then gross motor functions.
3. Decreased level of consciousness with a glassy stare and possible freezing of the extremities.
4. Decreased vital signs with slow pulse and slow respiration rate.
5. Death.

### First aid:

- Remove wet clothing and keep patient dry.
- Apply external heat to both sides of the patient using whatever heat sources are available.
- If the patient is conscious and in a warm place, have him breathe warm, moist air if available.
- Monitor respirations and pulse and provide artificial ventilation and CPR as required.
- Do not give hot liquids by mouth.