

H.9 HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia occurs when a person's body temperature drops below 35 °C (95 °F) (the normal body temperature is around 37 °C (98.6 °F)).

Hypothermia can quickly become life threatening and should be treated as a medical emergency.

It's usually caused by being in a cold environment and can be triggered by a combination of factors, such as being outdoors in cold conditions for a long time, living in a poorly heated house or falling into cold water.

H.9.1 WHAT DO I SEE AND ENQUIRE?

You may observe following signs and symptoms:

- shivering, though this may stop as body temperature drops;
- slurred speech or mumbling;
- slow, shallow breathing;
- weak pulse;
- clumsiness or lack of coordination;
- drowsiness or very low energy;
- confusion or memory loss;
- loss of consciousness; or
- bright red, cold skin (in infants).

H.9.2 WHAT DO I DO?

H.9.2.1 SAFETY FIRST

1. Make sure you are protected sufficiently against the cold, prior helping the other person

H.9.2.2 PROVIDE FIRST AID

2. Gently move the person out of the cold.

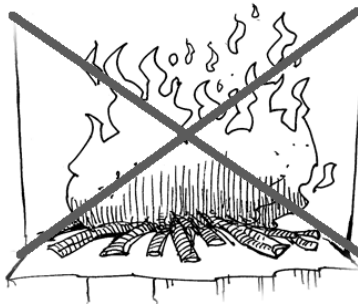
If going indoors isn't possible, protect the person from the wind, especially around the neck and head and insulate the individual from the cold ground.



3. Gently remove wet clothing. Replace wet things with warm, dry coats or blankets.
4. If further warming is needed, do so gradually. For example, apply warm, dry compresses to the center of the body — neck, chest and groin.



5. Offer the person warm, sweet, non-alcoholic drinks slowly in sips. This is another important exception to general principles of first aid (not giving casualty to eat or drink).



6. Do not apply direct heat. Do not rewarm the person too quickly, such as with a heating lamp or hot bath.



7. Don't attempt to warm the arms and legs. Heating or massaging the limbs of someone in this condition can stress the heart and lungs.



Do not eat, drink, or smoke.

8. Don't give the person alcohol or cigarettes. Alcohol hinders the rewarming process, and tobacco products interfere with circulation that is needed for rewarming.
9. Urgently transport the person to the nearest healthcare facility or hospital.

H.9.2.2.1 WHAT DO I DO IF THE PERSON IS UNCONSCIOUS, BUT IS STILL BREATHING?

- a. Put the person in the recovery position.
- b. Continue to observe the victim and check his breathing

H.9.2.2.2 WHAT DO I DO WHEN THE PERSON STOPPED BREATHING?

Perform CPR.

Do not interrupt the resuscitation until:

- help arrives and takes over;
- the person starts to wake up, moves, opens his eyes and breathes normally;
- you become too exhausted to continue, or
- the scene becomes unsafe for you to continue.

H.9.2.3 HYGIENE

Wash your hands after taking care of the patient. Use soap and water to wash your hands. If no soap is available, you can use ash to wash your hands. Alcohol-based sanitizers can also be used, if available.

H.9.3 WHEN TO REFER TO A HEALTHCARE FACILITY?



Always urgently transport the hypothermic person to the nearest healthcare facility.

I. POISONING

In this chapter you will learn about:

- Poisoning.