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Frostbite

Frostbite is an injury to the body that is caused by freezing. 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** [<https://medlineplus.gov/limbloss.html>] .

If you have frostbite, the skin in that area may turn white or grayish-yellow. It may feel firm or waxy when you touch it. The area will also feel numb.

If you have symptoms of frostbite, seek medical care. But if immediate medical care isn't available, here are steps to take:

- Get into a warm room as soon as possible.
- If possible, do not walk on frostbitten feet or toes. Walking increases the damage.
- Put the affected area in warm - not hot - water.
- You can also warm the affected area using body heat. For example, use your armpit to warm frostbitten fingers.
- Don't rub the frostbitten area with snow or massage it at all. This can cause more damage.
- Don't use a heating pad, heat lamp, or the heat of a stove, fireplace, or radiator for warming. Since frostbite makes an area numb, you could burn it.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Start Here

- Frostbite [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/frostbite/symptoms-causes/syc-20372656?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/frostbite/symptoms-causes/syc-20372656?p=1>]

Prevention and Risk Factors

- Avoid Frostbite and Hypothermia [<https://www.nsc.org/community-safety/safety-topics/seasonal-safety/winter-safety/frostbite>] (National Safety Council)
- Cold Stress Can Be Prevented [<https://www.osha.gov/winter-weather/cold-stress>] (Occupational Safety and Health Administration)
- Preventing Frostbite [<https://www.cdc.gov/winter-weather/prevention/preventing-frostbite.html>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Preventing Trench Foot or Immersion Foot [<https://www.cdc.gov/natural-disasters/psa-toolkit/preventing-trench-foot-or-immersion-foot.html>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Treatments and Therapies

- Frostbite, First Aid [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/first-aid-frostbite/?lmiw9cApI=1>] (VisualDX)
- Frostbite: First Aid [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid/first-aid-frostbite/basics/ART-20056653?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/first-aid/first-aid-frostbite/basics/art-20056653?p=1>]


Related Issues

- Physical Allergy [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/immune-disorders/allergic-reactions-and-other-hypersensitivity-disorders/physical-allergy>] (Merck & Co., Inc.)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/hogar/trastornos-inmuno%C3%B3gicos/reacciones-al%C3%A9rgicas-y-otros-trastornos-de-hipersensibilidad/alergia-f%C3%ADsica>]
- Working in the Cold [<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/cold-stress/about/>] (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health)

Specifics

- Chilblains [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/chilblains/symptoms-causes/syc-20351097?p=1>]
(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/chilblains/symptoms-causes/syc-20351097?p=1>]

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Frostbite [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Frostbite%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]
 (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Patient and treatment characteristics that predict symptom resolution and limb amputation... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40424671>]
- Article: Skin organoid transplantation promotes tissue repair with scarless in frostbite. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/39363875>]
- Article: Construction and validation of a risk prediction model for soldiers with... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/39272064>]
- Frostbite -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Frostbite%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+2+Years%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [<https://www.cdc.gov/>]
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/>]
- National Center for Environmental Health [<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health [<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/index.html>]
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/niosh/>]

Patient Handouts

- Frostbite [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000057.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000057.htm>]
- How to prevent frostbite and hypothermia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000866.htm>]
(Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000866.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Frostbite [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000057.htm>]

How to prevent frostbite and hypothermia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000866.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Hypothermia [<https://medlineplus.gov/hypothermia.html>]

Winter Weather Emergencies [<https://medlineplus.gov/winterweatheremergencies.html>]

NIH MedlinePlus Magazine

Hypothermia and Frostbite: Easier to Develop Than You Might Think

[<https://magazine.medlineplus.gov/article/hypothermia-and-frostbite-easier-to-develop-than-you-might-think>]

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