

### Dressing for extreme cold

- The body loses a large amount of heat through the head and neck. Protect your head from the cold weather, wear a hat.
- Damp or wet clothing loses all insulating value and should be changed as soon as possible.
- Wear layers of clothing made of cotton or wool instead of one big thick garment. Layering your clothing helps to trap your body heat and layers can be removed as needed to prevent sweating.

### Examples of layering clothing

thermal long johns, one or two shirts, pants, sweater, and then a coat.

- When outdoors, wear waterproof outer garments which will repel wind and moisture.
- Wear waterproof boots.
- Wear mittens instead of gloves. Mittens allow your fingers to touch, creating body heat to keep your hands warmer.
- Finally, protect the exposed portions of your face with hand lotion or Vaseline.

### Louisville Metro Government

#### Where to get help!

Crisis & Information Center .....589-4313

Crisis & Information Center TDD .....589-4259

Metro Call .....574-5000

Metro Call TDD .....574-4091

Coalition for the Homeless .....589-0190

Louisville Metro Department of Public Health & Wellness .....574-6520

### It is important to stay tuned to a radio or TV when cold weather strikes ... Know what the forecast means!

**Winter Storm Watch** : Severe weather conditions, freezing rain, sleet, or heavy snow may affect our area.

**Winter Storm Warning** : Severe weather, freezing rain, sleet, or heavy snow is about to occur.

**Heavy Snow Warning** : At least 4 inches in 12 hours or 6 inches in 24 hours is expected. In areas where snow is less common. A **Warning** may be issued even if predicted snowfall is not great.

**Blizzard Warning** : A lot of falling and/or blowing snow with low visibility and winds of at least 35 miles per hour are expected for several hours.

**Ice Storm Warning** : Significant, possibly damaging, ice accumulations expected. Freezing rain ( or drizzle ) means precipitation is expected to freeze when it hits exposed surfaces.

**Wind Chill Factor** : The wind chill factor is the way forecasters measure how cold it feels on your skin. This statistic combines temperature and wind speed into a single freezing number. 5-07



## Extreme Cold Weather

## Cold Weather Health Problems

*What you need to know to keep yourself safe!*



Exposure to cold temperatures, whether indoors or outside, can cause serious or life-threatening health problems. Infants and the elderly are particularly at risk, but anyone can be affected. To keep yourself and your family safe, you should know how to prevent cold-related health problems and what to do in an emergency.

## Hypothermia

When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced. If you stay outdoors for a long time, you will soon use up your body's stored energy. The result is low body temperature. Body temperature that is too low affects the brain, making the victim unable to think clearly or move well. This can be very dangerous because a person may not know hypothermia is happening and won't be able to do anything about it. Hypothermia happens most often at very cold temperatures. It can occur even at cool temperatures (above 40°F) if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat, or submersion in cold water. Victims of hypothermia are most often (1) elderly people with little food, clothing, or heating; (2) babies sleeping in cold bedrooms; and (3) people who stay outdoors for long periods -- the homeless, hikers, hunters, etc.

## Recognizing Hypothermia

### Adults

- shivering, exhaustion
- confusion, fumbling hands
- memory loss, slurred speech
- drowsiness

### Infants

- bright red, cold skin
- very low energy

## Hypothermia : What to Do

If you see any symptoms of hypothermia in a person, take their temperature. If it is below 95°, the situation is a medical emergency -- get medical help quickly! If medical help is not available, begin to warm the person by doing the following:

- Get the victim into a warm room.
- If the victim has on any wet clothes, remove them.
- Warm the center of the body first -- chest, neck, head, groin -- using an electric blanket, if you have one. You can also use skin-to-skin contact under loose, dry layers of blankets, sheets, towels or clothing.
- Warm drinks can help increase the body temperature, but do not give alcoholic drinks. Do not try to give anything to drink to an unconscious person.
- After body temperature has risen, keep the person dry and wrapped in a warm blanket, including the head and neck.
- Get medical attention quickly.

A person with severe hypothermia may be unconscious and may not seem to have a pulse or appear to be breathing. Handle the victim gently and get medical help immediately! Even if the victim appears dead, CPR should be started. CPR should continue while the victim is being warmed, and until the victim responds or emergency medical help arrives. Some hypothermia victims who appear to be dead can be successfully resuscitated.

## Frostbite

Frostbite is an injury to the body that is caused by freezing. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and color in the affected areas. It most often affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes.

## Recognizing Frostbite

At the first signs of redness or pain in any skin area, get out of the cold or protect any exposed skin -- frostbite may be starting. Look for these signs:

- a white or grayish-yellow skin area
- skin that feels firm or waxy
- numbness

## Frostbite : What to Do

If you see signs of frostbite, get medical help. Because frostbite and hypothermia both result from exposure, first see if the victim also shows any signs of hypothermia. Hypothermia is a more serious medical condition and requires emergency care.

If you can not get immediate medical care, do the following:

- Get into a warm room quickly.
- Unless you have to, do not walk on frostbitten feet or toes.
- Do not rub the frostbitten area with snow or massage it at all. This can cause more damage.
- Put the affected area in warm, **not hot** water. (lukewarm to touch)
- Or, warm the frostbitten area using body heat. (the heat of an armpit to warm frostbitten fingers). Don't use a heating pad, heat of a stove, or other heat source for warming. You can easily burn the frostbitten area.