

HYPOTHERMIA - SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of mild hypothermia include:

- shivering
- feeling cold
- low energy
- less able to tolerate the cold than normal
- cold, pale skin



The symptoms of moderate hypothermia include:

- violent, uncontrollable shivering,
- inability to think or pay attention to events
- confusion (some people don't realise they are affected)
- loss of judgement and reasoning
- difficulty moving around or stumbling
- feeling fearful
- memory loss
- fumbling hands
- drowsiness
- slurred speech
- listlessness and indifference
- slow, shallow breathing and weak pulse

The symptoms of severe hypothermia include:

- loss of control of hands, feet, and limbs
- shivering stops
- unconsciousness
- shallow or no breathing
- weak, irregular or no pulse
- stiff muscles
- dilated pupils

HYPOTHERMIA - TREATMENT

Hypothermia is treated by preserving body heat and preventing any more being lost. If you are treating someone with mild hypothermia follow the advice below.

Things you should do:

- move the person into a tent/shelter as soon as possible
- ensure that they change out of any wet clothing
- wrap them in blankets, towels, coats - whatever you have - protecting the head and torso as a priority. Your own body heat, or any team members, can help someone with hypothermia - try gently hugging them
- increase activity if possible, but not to the point where sweating occurs, which cools the skin down again
- if possible, give the person carbohydrates to eat to provide rapid energy, or fats to provide prolonged fuel to the body,
- give them warm drinks
- once body temperature has increased, be sure to keep the person warm and dry
- if no improvement dial 999
- also see **Emergency Procedures** information sheet

Things you should NOT do:

- **apply direct heat** (hot water, a heating pad etc.) to the arms and legs as this forces cold blood back to the major organs, making the condition worse,
- **rub or massage the person** as, in severe cases of hypothermia, there is a risk of heart attack (it is very important to be gentle).

Severe hypothermia needs **urgent medical treatment in hospital.**

Shivering is a good guide to how severe the hypothermia is. If the person can stop shivering of their own accord, hypothermia is mild, but if they cannot stop shivering, it is moderate to severe.

HEAT EXHAUSTION / HEAT STROKE - SYMPTOMS

If left untreated, heat exhaustion can lead to heatstroke, so it's important to be aware of the signs.

Symptoms of heat exhaustion include:

- headaches
- dizziness
- nausea and vomiting
- muscle weakness or cramps
- stomach cramps
- tiredness
- loss of appetite
- skin paler than normal
- weak pulse
- high temperature



If you experience these symptoms after exposure to hot conditions, physical exertion or burns, move to a cool area and re-hydrate by drinking plenty of fluids. A sports drink or rehydration solution can provide rapid rehydration, although in most cases, plain water is fine.

Remove any excess clothing and to cool your skin down, Left untreated, these symptoms can develop into heatstroke. Heatstroke can also occur suddenly and with little warning.

The symptoms of heatstroke include:

- symptoms of heat exhaustion
- confusion and disorientation
- visual hallucinations
- convulsions (uncontrollable muscle twitching)
- unconsciousness
- racing, thumping pulse
- flushed, hot and dry skin
- a sudden rise in temperature

HEAT EXHAUSTION / HEAT STROKE – TREATMENT

Treatment for heatstroke, or suspected heatstroke:

- get professional medical help as quickly as possible
- move to a cool area as quickly as possible
- give them water to drink if possible, **but do not give medication** such as aspirin or paracetamol
- shower the skin with cool (not cold), water (15 to 18 degrees C)
- alternatively, cover the body with cool, damp towels or immerse in cool water
- gently massage the skin to encourage circulation
- if convulsions start, move nearby objects out of the way to prevent injury (do not use force or put anything in the mouth)
- if the patient is unconscious and vomiting, move them into the recovery position by turning them on their side and making sure their airways are clear
- dial 999 and take to a hospital as soon as possible

