



Preventing Weather Emergencies Hypothermia, Frost Bite

Everyone is sensitive to extremes in weather -- especially older adults. With age, the body may become less able to respond to long exposure to very hot or very cold temperatures.

Hypothermia can be a real problem for older people who often have other illnesses or take medications that can interfere with the body's ability to regulate its temperature. Hypothermia is a drop in internal body temperature that can be fatal if not detected and treated. This very serious condition occurs when exposure to cold causes a person's body to lose heat faster than it can be replaced. Symptoms are:

- Slow or slurred speech
- Apparent exhaustion
- Uncontrollable shivering
- Repeated stumbling
- Incoherence
- Disorientation
- Drowsiness
- Memory loss

Frostbite is another extreme weather danger. Symptoms are numbness and a white or pale appearance to the skin. When symptoms are apparent for either hypothermia or frostbite, seek medical help immediately!

Cold weather tips:

- Dress in layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, water-repellent clothing;
- Make sure the house is well insulated and not drafty;
- Eat and drink properly to supply heat and avoid dehydration;
- Wear a hat (most body heat is lost through the head);
- Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect lungs from cold air; and
- Avoid overexertion (such as shoveling heavy snow which could cause a heart attack).

In the extreme cold, it is best to stay indoors as much as possible to avoid the harsh conditions. If this is not possible, please take care to protect yourself from the elements by using the utmost in precaution. Stay safe and warm!