



## Winter Weather: Are You Ready?

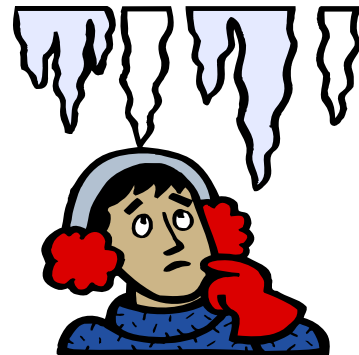
### *In This Issue:*

- *What is Hypothermia?*
- *When Does Hypothermia Occur?*
- *What Can I Do to Prevent Hypothermia?*
- *Are Some People More at Risk for Hypothermia than Others?*
- *What Can I Do to Help Someone Who Has Hypothermia?*

Winter weather is here, and with it, come health risks. Cold weather increases the risk for hypothermia, which is a serious health problem. The information in this newsletter will help you to learn how to prevent hypothermia.

### What is Hypothermia?

More than 600 people a year die from the effects of hypothermia, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can be replaced, and the body can no longer maintain a normal body temperature. Your normal body temperature is about 98.6°F. If it drops to 97°F, you may have mild hypothermia. If it goes down to 95°F or lower, you have hypothermia that needs immediate medical treatment.



The signs of hypothermia usually come on gradually and include shivering, pale or whitened skin in adults or flushed skin in children, tingling sensations in hands and feet followed by numbness, decreased coordination and slurred speech.

### Are Some People More at Risk for Hypothermia than Others?

The elderly are more at risk because their bodies may not be able to adjust to cold temperatures as well as younger people. Some people who have chronic illnesses may also lose their ability to sense the cold. People who work outdoors in cold weather are at risk because of the amount of time they spend outside.

### When Does Hypothermia Occur?

Hypothermia can occur when you have been out in the cold air for a long time. In addition, if your clothing becomes soaked with water, hypothermia may occur at air temperatures of over 40°F.

**Call 9-1-1 right away if someone has the signs of hypothermia**

## What Can I Do to Help Someone Who Has Hypothermia?

There are a few things that you can do to start warming someone. They are:

- Move the person into a warm room or shelter.
- Remove all wet clothing.
- Cover the chest, neck, head and groin with dry blankets, clothing, towels or sheets.
- If the person is awake and able to drink liquids, give him or her warm liquids. Do not let him or her drink any alcohol.

## What Can I Do to Prevent Hypothermia?

**Dress warmly.** Be sure to wear:

- A hat or scarf that covers your head
- A scarf or knit mask to cover your face and mouth
- Gloves or mittens (mittens are warmer than gloves)
- A warm coat and boots that are water-resistant
- Several layers of loose-fitting clothing. Wool or silk inner layers of clothing will hold more body heat than cotton

**Stay dry.** Wet clothing will chill your body very fast. If you perspire a lot, it will increase heat loss, so remove extra layers of clothing whenever you feel too warm. Do not ignore shivering. It is an important first sign that the body is losing heat. Constant shivering is a signal to get indoors and warm up.

### *For More Information:*

- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- [www.dph.state.ct.us/bt/ready/wstorms.html](http://www.dph.state.ct.us/bt/ready/wstorms.html)
- [www.nia.nih.gov/NR/rdonlyres/2E5CDADE-FAD7-44BA-B0BE-E8764EAABB4F/O/Stay\\_Safe\\_In\\_Cold\\_Weather.pdf](http://www.nia.nih.gov/NR/rdonlyres/2E5CDADE-FAD7-44BA-B0BE-E8764EAABB4F/O/Stay_Safe_In_Cold_Weather.pdf)



### **YALE CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS**

2 Church Street South, Suite 314  
New Haven, CT 06519  
Phone: 203-764-9713  
E-mail: [cphp@yale.edu](mailto:cphp@yale.edu)

<http://publichealth.yale.edu/ycphp>  
<http://blogs.yale.edu/roller/page/prepare>

*The Yale CPHP is funded by the CDC through Cooperative Agreement #U90/CCU124251-02*

**Mission:** As part of a national network of Centers for Public Health Preparedness that are funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Yale Center for Public Health Preparedness, based at the Yale School of Public Health, works to ensure that frontline public health workers are prepared to respond to public health emergencies including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and disease outbreaks.

*The purpose of this newsletter is to provide preparedness information to the general public.  
If you have suggestions for future newsletter topics or to comment on preparedness issues, please email us at [cphp@yale.edu](mailto:cphp@yale.edu)  
To subscribe to this newsletter, please send an email to [cphp@yale.edu](mailto:cphp@yale.edu) with “public” in the subject line.*