

WINTER CAMP FIRST AID & CARE

Hypothermia

This is the body's temperature decreasing due to exposure to the cold conditions. It can be life threatening. A person can become hypothermic without even noticing it.

Symptoms:

Shivering, Slurred speech, Non-communication, Lethargy.

Prevention:

Stay warm, Stay dry, Stay hydrated, and Eat well!

Remedies:

Put on dry clothing.

Eat and drink warm foods and fluids.

Put the person in a sleeping bag pre-warmed by another person—a hypothermic person doesn't have enough heat to warm the bag. Put warm water in bottles and place them in the sleeping bag with the person. Use another person to warm the hypothermic person. In severe cases, careful evacuation to a medical facility is required.

Tip: Have a hot drink or soup—it'll warm you up when you're getting cold.

Frostnip/Frostbite

This happens in cold-weather conditions. Frostnip is a mild freezing of the skin and Frostbite is more severe freezing of the skin and underlying tissues usually on the fingers, toes, nose or face. It is a result of heat being lost faster than the blood can circulate.

Symptoms:

Numbness to an area, Loss of sensitivity to touch, Tingling that feels like burning, Shivering, Skin appears red and then white-to-purple.

Prevention:

Be aware of your body signals & Stay warm and dry.

Remedies:

Place the cold/frostbitten appendages against warm skin, such as your feet against a companion's stomach or armpits, or your fingers in your own armpits.

Use warm water on the afflicted area.

Do not use fire to thaw area—speedy relief can increase the injury.

Do not rub because the abrasive action could damage tissue more.

Evacuate to a medical facility if severe.

Tip: Use chemical heat packs to help stay warm and to avoid getting frostnip/ frostbite.

Dehydration

Even when the temperature is low, you can still get dehydrated. So drink plenty of water—even if you're not thirsty. Drink before you become thirsty.

Symptoms: Increased heart rate, Dry mouth, Dizziness, Muscle cramps, Confusion, Weakness.

For treating water:

Water filters do not work in sub-freezing weather—the filter and seals freeze. Chemical water treatments take longer to work in cold water, so allow extra time.

Melting snow is a good option. Putting a little bit of water in the pot with the snow will help it melt faster.

Tip: In extreme cold, use a water bottle cover for your bottle. Turn the bottle upside down. (Water freezes from the top down, so by turning it right-side up you'll be able to unscrew the cap and drink.) A good way to determine if you're drinking enough is to check the color of your urine. If it's dark, you are dehydrated. If it's pale in color, you're doing a good job hydrating!



WINTER CAMP CARE TIPS



Clothing:

- Remember **C O L D**:
C lean - dirty clothes lose their loft and get you cold.
O verheat - never get sweaty, strip off layers to stay warm but no too hot.
L ayers - Dress in synthetic/wool layers for easy temperature control.
D ry - wet clothes (and sleeping bags) also lose their insulation.
- **COTTON KILLS!** Do not bring cotton to winter camp as it stays wet for hours. Staying dry is the key to staying warm. Air is an excellent insulator and by wearing several layers of clothes you will keep warm.
- Remember the 3 W's of layering - Wicking inside layer, Warmth middle layer(s) and Wind/Water outer layer. Wicking should be a polypropylene material as long underwear and also sock liner. Warmth layer(s) should be fleece or wool. The Wind/Water layer should be Gore-Tex or at least 60/40 nylon.
- Dress right for sleeping: Change into clean, dry clothes before bed. Your body makes moisture and your clothes hold it in - by changing into dry clothes you will stay warmer and it will help keep the inside of your sleeping bag dry. Wearing wool socks, long underwear (tops and bottoms) & toque are great winter camp PJ's.
- Put next day's clothes in your sleeping bag at bedtime so they will be nice and warm for tomorrow.

Food:

Winter camping burns more fat and calories as your body requires more energy to keep your body warm. Foods high in fat, complex carbohydrates and protein release their energy slowly, and thus are better food choices for keeping you warmer.

- * Proteins (meats, dairy and eggs) help build muscles and body tissue.
- * Fats (nuts and meats) are used primarily for energy.
- * Carbohydrates (cereals, legumes, vegetables, fruits, breads and candy) also provide energy.

To stay warmer, don't stop for long meals where you cool down and then need to put on more layers. Instead, take short meal breaks to snack on food, or simply nibble while you're moving. Consider foods that don't take much time to cook or clean up. Look for one-pot meals, freeze-dried entrees, or just add hot water food options. Fewer to no dirty dishes!

Avoid alcohol and caffeine. Alcohol increases blood flow and cools your core temperature; caffeine restricts blood flow and cools your extremities.

Eat lots of snacks - Be sure to eat before, during and after your activity to keep your energy up and help your body recover.

Other:

- A space blanket or silver lined tarp on the floor of the tent or under your sleeping pad will reflect your heat back to you.
- Put water tight water bottles filled with warm water or chemical hand warmers in your sleeping bag before bed to warm it.
- Drain your bladder before you go to bed. It's a waste of body energy heating your urine and having to go in the middle of the night chills your entire body. Drink lots of fluids all day, but stop one hour before bed.
- Don't burrow into your sleeping bag; keep your mouth and nose outside the bag. Moisture from your breath collecting in your bag is a quick way to get real cold. Keep the inside of the bag dry.