

# HYPOTHERMIA

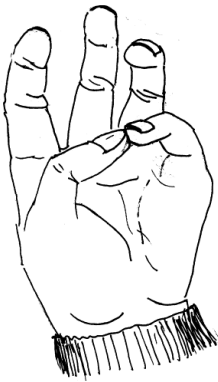
## WHAT IS HYPOTHERMIA?

Hypothermia is a medical term for the lowering of the temperature of the core of your body. You do not have to be in subfreezing temperatures to lose more body heat than your body produces. You can be in real trouble before you know you are losing too much body heat.

## WHAT THINGS INCREASE CHANCES OF HYPOTHERMIA?

Anyone with poor physical condition, especially someone with a thin build or anyone with exhaustion, is at increased risk. Not taking in enough water (urinate every three to four hours at least) or fuel in the form of high-calorie food is also dangerous. Inadequate protection from wind, cold or wetness will increase the rate of heat loss from your body.

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF HYPOTHERMIA?



contents©1997  
wendie howland

You are more likely to see early signs of hypothermia in your buddy than in yourself, because one of the **first** signs is a loss of ability to think clearly. You might notice him slowing down, looking tired, losing coordination or stumbling. His speech may be a little thick or what he says may not make sense. Shivering is a later sign of hypothermia. When shivering stops, a person begins to lose touch with reality, and the skin begins to become greyish or blue, this person is in really bad trouble.

Check yourselves for hypothermia every hour and anytime you feel cold. You can check yourself and each other for early hypothermia by touching your little finger and thumb together. **If you can't do this, STOP AND WARM UP IMMEDIATELY.**

## WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT HYPOTHERMIA?

Shelter from wind and weather with a screen or tent and better clothing. Insulate from the ground on a pad. Change any wet clothing (don't forget to check socks) for dry. Get the person to exercise if you can. Add heat to his body by giving him hot things to drink right away, and give him candy or other high-sugar foods. Put in a prewarmed sleeping bag or blankets with hot stones or canteens of hot water (be careful not to burn him) or another person if he doesn't start to improve right away. Get him to help as soon as you can.

Hypothermia is much easier to prevent than to treat. Be prepared for conditions with proper gear, clothing, food, and water.

# BE PREPARED!