

HYPOTHERMIA

WHAT YOU KNOW COULD SAVE A LIFE

Hypothermia Facts: Did you know?

- Hypothermia is a common cause of illness and death in urban areas
- People can die of hypothermia even when the temperature is above freezing, especially if it's wet or windy
- People who are hypothermic may be lethargic and confused – they can look like they're intoxicated, when really they're sick and need medical attention
- People who have the greatest risk of dying from hypothermia include:

- Homeless people
- Substance abusers
- People with psychiatric disorders
- Elderly people
- People with chronic medical conditions or malnutrition

Recognize the Signs

- Lethargy and confusion
- Slurred speech
- Trouble walking normally
- Uncontrollable shivering – note that shivering STOPS as patients get colder, because the muscles tire out. People with the most severe hypothermia may not shiver

What Can You Do?

- SUSPECT hypothermia in people who look like they're intoxicated, are confused, are having trouble walking or talking, or are shivering uncontrollably
- Help the person get warm again:

- Remove all wet clothing
- Cover the person with a warm dry blanket
- Give the person a hot beverage
- Allow them to remain indoors to warm up

- Call 911 and send the person to the hospital if:

- Initial symptoms are severe OR
- The person is not improving after 1-2 hours of rewarming OR
- If you use a thermometer, send all people with oral temperatures of 93 degrees or below to the hospital immediately

