

Teacher Resource: Cold and Heat Related Illnesses

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is when the body gets so cold that it has trouble warming itself up again. This can be dangerous because the organs inside the body can stop working if they get too cold. Hypothermia can happen during any season.

Signs/Symptoms

- Early stage hypothermia: Shivering, feeling very tired, confused, numb hands, slurred speech.
- Late stage hypothermia: No more shivering, low responsive/unresponsive, pale skin, low pulse, low breathing rate.

Treatment

- Get help immediately from an adult.
- Move the person out of the cold.
- Remove any wet clothing.
- Cover the person with blankets.
- Watch their breathing.
- Give them something warm to drink.

Heat exhaustion

Heat exhaustion starts slowly, but if it's not quickly treated it can progress to heatstroke. Heat exhaustion occurs when our body attempts to work in overdrive to cool ourselves down when it is warm outside.

Signs/Symptoms

Thirst, weakness or very tired, muscle cramps, nausea, headache.

Treatment

- Get help immediately from an adult.
- Get the person into a cool place.
- Loosen their clothing.
- Have them drink fluids.

Heat stroke

In heatstroke, a person's temperature reaches 105°F (40.5°C) or higher and our body can no longer cool itself down. Heatstroke requires immediate emergency medical care and can be life-threatening.

Signs/Symptoms

Severe headache, weakness, dizziness, confusion, fast breathing and fast heartbeat.

Treatment

- Get help immediately from an adult.
- Get the person into a cool place.
- Cool them down with a damp cloth and a fan.
- Have them drink fluids.

Sunburn

Sunburn can happen within 15 minutes of being in the sun, the redness and discomfort may not be seen or felt for a few hours.

Signs/Symptoms

Red skin and blisters, pain and tingling, fever and chills.

Treatment

- Get help immediately from an adult.
- Cool the skin with a damp towel with cool tap water.
- Drink water to prevent dehydration.
- Consider applying a soothing cream.
- Don't break the blisters.

(Definitions: KidsHealth.org, 2021)

Reference

KidsHealth.org. (2021). Diseases and Conditions and Staying Safe.