

Region IV Risk Management

Cold Weather Caution - Hypothermia

Exposure to cold can produce a variety of injuries that occur as a result of the player's inability to adapt to cold. These injuries can be either a localized injury (frostbite) or hypothermia. Hypothermia occurs when the core body temperature has decreased to 95 degrees F or less. Extended periods of exposure during training or matches could result in stages of mild hypothermia. Wet and windy weather also are contributing factors.

Early Hypothermia Symptoms include:

- Shivering • Cold, pale, or blue-gray skin
- Lack of interest or concern • Poor judgment
- Mild unsteadiness in balance or walking • Slurred speech
- Numb hands and fingers • Difficulty performing tasks

It is important to know the early symptoms of hypothermia and get treatment quickly. In mild cases, moving the person into a warm environment will provide sufficient remedy. However, if someone begins to shiver violently, stumble, or can't respond to questions, suspect hypothermia, warm them quickly and seek the opinion of a qualified health professional. For more information on Hypothermia and Cold Temperature Exposure see www.nlm.nih.gov Medline Plus and search under Hypothermia.

Suggested Prevention Tips:

Prior to training or matches, have the latest up-to-date information about current and future weather conditions. Weather in Colorado can change by the hour. It is better to have the warm clothing in the car than to wish you would have brought it. Remember that wind-chill accelerates exposure. Fingers and ears are affected first and should be protected. Dress appropriately for the conditions. There is highly efficient clothing that holds temperature and is not bulky or cumbersome to wear. Glove liners and ear bands are also effective and not cumbersome.

The National Weather Service Wind-chill temperature index is used to estimate the relative risk of frostbite. That chart is available below. The wind-chill calculator is available at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/windchill/index.shtml>. A few precautionary steps will help prevent both frostbite and hypothermia. Be ready for weather changes and have additional clothing in the car.



NWS Windchill Chart

