



Frostbite is damage to the skin and tissues caused by extreme cold. Frostbite can affect any part of the body, but the hands, feet, nose, and ears are at most risk.

Preventing Frostbite...

- ❄ Factors that contribute to frostbite include extreme cold, wet clothes, high winds, and poor circulation. Tight clothing or boots, cramped positions, fatigue, certain medications, smoking, alcohol use, and diseases that affect the blood vessels can cause poor circulation.
- ❄ When spending time in the cold, wear mittens, several layers of clothing, two pairs of socks, a scarf, a hat that covers the ears, and a wind-proof, water-resistant outer layer.
- ❄ In a severe snowstorm, find shelter early and increase physical activity to keep the body warm.

Symptoms of Frostbite...

- ❄ There will be a "pins and needles" sensation followed by numbness.
- ❄ Frostbitten skin is hard, pale, cold, and has no feeling. When skin has thawed, it becomes red and painful. With more severe frostbite, the skin may appear white and numb.

First Aid for Frostbite...

- ❄ Move the victim to a warmer place and remove any constricting or wet items.
- ❄ If immediate medical help is available, take the victim to the closest emergency department.
- ❄ If immediate medical help is **not** available, use re-warming first aid. Put affected areas in warm (not hot) water – or apply warm cloths to affected ears, nose, or cheeks repeatedly – for 20 to 30 minutes. The water temperature should be 104 to 108°F. Circulate the water to aid warming. Severe burning pain, swelling, and color changes may occur during warming. Warming is complete when the skin is soft and sensation returns.
- ❄ Apply dry, sterile dressings to the frostbitten areas – keep fingers and toes separated.
- ❄ Move thawed areas as little as possible.
- ❄ Call 911 if normal feeling does not return or if new symptoms develop.

Remember...

- ❄ DO NOT thaw out a frostbitten area if it can't be kept thawed. Refreezing may make tissue damage worse.
- ❄ DO NOT use direct dry heat (such as a radiator, campfire, heating pad, or hair dryer) to thaw the frostbitten areas. Direct heat can burn the tissues that are already damaged.
- ❄ DO NOT rub or massage the affected area.
- ❄ DO NOT disturb blisters on frostbitten skin.
- ❄ DO NOT smoke or drink alcohol during recovery, they can interfere with blood circulation.



The Oakland County Health Division will not deny participation in its programs based on race, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability. State and federal eligibility requirements apply for certain programs.