



Let's Talk Safety

Frostbite

Frostbite, an injury to superficial tissues caused by freezing, is probably the most common injury resulting from exposure to cold elements. Cold, humidity, and high winds are the main factors involved in frostbite, but many other things contribute to its development, such as contact with wetness or metal, inadequate clothing, age, and one's general health condition.

Understanding Frostbite:

- The temperature, amount of moisture, length of exposure, and the person's physical condition determine the severity of the injury.
- Small areas such as the nose, cheeks, ears, and extremities are most vulnerable.
- As with burns, frostbite is classified by degrees. First degree, the least severe, is freezing without blistering or peeling. Second degree is freezing with blistering and peeling. Third degree, the most severe, is freezing with death of skin and possibly deeper tissues.
- In mild cases of frostbite, the symptoms are generally numbness, prickling, and itching of the affected part. As frostbite develops, the symptoms become more intense.
- Initially the frozen flesh will be hard and white, but later will become red or mottled. Pain may be felt initially, but it will subside. Often there is no pain. Blisters may form and the affected part is intensely cold and numb.

Treating Frostbite:

1. Drink Warm Fluids
2. Rewarm the frozen part rapidly by immersing it in warm, not hot, water. If water is not available or practical to use, wrap the affected part gently in a sheet and warm blankets.
3. Discontinue warming when the affected part becomes flushed. Thawing will cause tenderness, burning pain, and swelling.
4. Remove all restrictive clothing, elevate the affected part, and seek medical assistance.
5. Don't rub the affected part.
6. Don't apply a heat lamp or hot water bottle.
7. Don't break the blisters.
8. Don't rub the affected part with snow or ice water.
9. Don't walk on frostbitten feet after thawing.
10. Limit your exposure time in extremely cold conditions.

"SAFETY IS A CORE VALUE"