

## HYPOTHERMIA & FROSTBITE

### SIGNS & SYMPTOMS:

1. Shaking/Shivering
2. Syncope
3. Slurred/slow speech
4. Slow pulse
5. Skin: pale, cool, clammy, red (white &/or black in late stages)
6. Neuro: ↓ LOC , seizures, unconscious, abnormal behavior, confusion

### OBTAIN HISTORY OF:

1. Prior events leading up to
2. Allergies
3. Consider other potential causes of symptoms: CVA, alcohol, seizures, overdose, head injury
4. Temperature

### PRECAUTIONS:

1. An altered or decreased LOC masks the signs of injury and illness.
2. Any patient with severe frostbite should be warmed slowly or further damage may occur.
3. Do not remove frozen clothes that may be stuck to the skin.
4. Do not rub any frostbitten digits.

### MEDICAL FIRST RESPONDER / BASIC LIFE SUPPORT:

1. Assess and support ABCs.
2. Consider oral or nasal airway initially if GCS < 9. If indicated, consider Combitube.
3. Begin high flow supplemental oxygen via mask.
4. Assess vital signs (BP, pulse, respirations, O<sub>2</sub> sats) min every 10 minutes; more often if unstable.
5. Begin warming patient slowly.
  - A. Remove all wet clothes from patient.
  - B. Wrap patient in blankets.
  - C. Move patient to climate-controlled environment.
6. Wrap all blisters with dry sterile dressings.
7. Do not break any blisters.
8. Frostbitten digits should be warmed slowly with 4x4 or 2x2 between the fingers or toes. (Warm water baths, blankets, no rubbing)

### INTERMEDIATE TECH:

1. Establish IV of warm\* NS to TKO.
  - A. \*Warm NS by placing on dash of ambulance or in an IV warming chamber.
2. Further orders must come from monitoring physician.

### INTERMEDIATE 99 & PARAMEDIC/RN:

1. Consider ET intubation if necessary.
2. Monitor ECG for abnormalities
3. Consider transporting patient to a facility with heart/lung bypass capabilities if patient remains unresponsive.

### PEDIATRIC CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Same as adult.

### SPECIAL NOTES:

1. Use extreme caution when handling frostbitten patients. Improper treatment could further harm patient's tissues.

