

Michigan TRAUMA AND ENVIRONMENTAL HYPOTHERMIA/FROSTBITE

Initial Date: 5/31/2012 Revised Date: 03/17/2025

Section 2-11

Hypothermia/Frostbite

1. Follow General Pre-hospital Care-Treatment Protocol

<u>HYPOTHERMIA:</u>

- If cardiac arrest develops follow Adult or Pediatric General Cardiac Arrest-Treatment Protocol.
- 2. Move patient to a warm dry place, then remove wet clothing & wrap in warm blankets and protect from wind exposure. The patient who can be evacuated to a warm environment (the ambulance) within 30 min should have their clothing left in place and wrapped in a vapor/wind barrier. Once in a warm environment, remove wet clothing, gently dry the skin and wrap in warm blankets.
- 3. If patient temperature is less than 30° C (86° F)
 - A. Gentle handling is required.
 - B. Facilitate transport immediately
- 4. If the patient's temperature is greater than 30° C (86° F) or patient shivering & conscious:
 - A. Apply heat packs to axillae and torso if possible.
 - B. Use warmed humidified oxygen if available.
 - 5. If altered mental status:
 - A. Check blood glucose (may be MFR skill, see **Blood Glucose Testing-Procedure Protocol**)
 - B. Treat as indicated per Adult or Pediatric Altered Mental Status-Treatment
 Protocol
 - C. Assess for other causes of alterations of mentation and treat according to applicable protocols.
 - 6. If hypotensive, follow **Shock-Treatment Protocol**.
 - S A. If a commercial device designed for warming IV fluids is available, warm fluid prior to administration.
 - 7. Administer oxygen.
 - A. If a commercial device designed for warming and/or humidifying oxygen is available, oxygen should be warmed and humidified prior to administration.
 - 8. If patient is alert, administer warm non-caffeinated beverages (if available) by mouth, slowly.

SUSPECTED FROSTBITE:

- 1. Remove wet or constricting clothing. Keep skin dry and protected from wind.
- 2. Do not allow the limb to thaw if there is a chance that limb may re-freeze before evacuation is complete or if patient must walk to transportation.
- 3. Dress injured areas lightly in clean cloth to protect from pressure, trauma or friction. Do not rub. Do not break blisters.
- 4. Keep patient warm.
- 5. Frostbitten areas should be supported and elevated during transport.
- 6. Treat pain per Pain Management-Procedure Protocol.



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Protocol Source/References: NASEMSO CLINICAL GUIDELINES Wilderness Medical Society Practice Guidelines for the Out-of-Hospital Evaluation and Treatment of Accidental Hypothermia. WILDERNESS & ENVIRONMENTAL MEDICINE, 25, 425–445 (2014)

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