

FEBRUARY 2020 SAFETY MESSAGE

The 2020 Focus of the National Burn Association is Contact Burns. During National Burn Awareness Week (February 2 - 8, 2020), Hypothermia and Frostbite are considered as a contact burn because of their effect on skin.

The CDC in 2013 stated:

- Hypothermia is a medical emergency.
- In the U.S., an average of 1,300 deaths per year is associated with cold exposure.
- 67% of hypothermia-related deaths were men.
- Alcohol and drug use increases the chances of suffering a frostbite injury and/or hypothermia.
- Those who suffer from diabetes, heart conditions, as well as infants and the elderly, are at greater risk of sustaining hypothermia in cold weather.
- Signs of hypothermia include slurred speech, shivering, weakness, confusion, drowsiness and/or loss of consciousness.
- Frostbite is freezing of exposed body parts such as the fingers, toes, nose, or earlobes and is a medical emergency. Frostbite maybe characterized by the affected area being cold to touch, appearing cherry- red, mottled, very pale, or even white.

For both Hypothermia and Frostbite, seek medical attention as soon as possible! Transfer to a verified Burn Center within 12 hours of exposure for a frostbitten limb offers the best chance of preserving fingers and toes.

Although, we have had a warmer than normal winter, cold spells especially with wind can lead to hypothermia and frostbite. Be sure to dress for these conditions and just like for hyperthermia and sunburn, be sure to be properly hydrated and know the symptoms.

Stay warm.