

Frost Bite

As we are facing a very cold weather, we will offer some advice for the prevention of frostbite or cold injury especially for children and old people to prevent any complication. Frostbite occurs when the flesh freezes due to prolonged exposure to cold temperatures. It is one of the disorders that cause damage to skin tissue at temperature 15C° or below due to blood vessels constriction to preserve body temperature. The organs that are usually affected include - Nose, Ears, Fingers, and Toes that are most exposed to cold. Frostbite is a serious condition that can lead to complications including gangrene, infection, amputation, and even death. Serious frostbite requires immediate medical attention.

Risk Factors

- Diabetes
- Peripheral neuropathy
- Use of beta-blockers
- Very young or very old age
- Smoking

Symptoms

- Skin Discolorations
- Loose skin
- Tingling/burning sensation
- Partial/Complete numbness

Treatment

Get medical help as soon as possible to prevent further complication. Meanwhile

- Wrap the affected area using clean cloth
- Move the victim to a warm place
- Treat hypothermia first, cover the person well
- Keep the frost-bitten site in warm but not in hot water to prevent bleeding
- This should be done till sensations return
- Do not massage.

Prevention is better than cure, the following are preventive measures to take:

- Avoid -
 - a. Extreme cold
 - b. Wet clothes
 - c. Chilly Wind
- During cold weather, wear several layers of clothing
- Wear accessories like-
 - a. Mittens, not gloves
 - b. Two pairs of socks
 - c. Hat / scarves to cover both ears well
- Get enough food and rest
- Avoid alcohol immediately before exposure to cold
- Avoid cotton clothing