



FROSTBITE



During the winter frostbite can occur even when the temperature is above freezing (32° Fahrenheit or 0° Celsius). This is especially true if there is wind or if a glove or sock gets wet. Cold injuries such as frostbite can be divided into two general groups: those without any freezing of the body tissue and those that result from the freezing of the skin or a body part (fingers, toes, ears, or nose). Frostbite is associated with tissue freezing.

COLD INJURY WITHOUT TISSUE FREEZING	COLD INJURY WITH TISSUE FREEZING
<p>CHILBLAINS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itching of affected area • Reddish-blue color to area • Swelling • Pain • Blistering (after a period of time) • Injured area becomes sensitive to cold • No other permanent damage 	<p>FROSTBITE (ICE CRYSTALS FORM IN THE CELLS AND CAUSE THE CELLS TO RUPTURE AND DIE)</p>
	<p>STAGES:</p> <hr/> <p>1ST DEGREE INJURY "FROSTNIP"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itching • Pain • Skin blanches • Sensitivity to cold • No permanent damage <hr/> <p>2ND DEGREE INJURY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skin frozen and hard • Blisters after 1-2 days • Blisters may become hard and black • Heals in 3-4 weeks • Permanent sensitivity to cold <hr/> <p>3RD OR 4TH DEGREE INJURY (DEEP FROSTBITE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muscles, tendons, blood vessels, nerves are frozen • Area frozen feels "woody" and use of the area is temporarily lost. In severe cases may be permanent • Area affected is deep purple or red with blisters (usually blood filled) • Takes several months to determine extent of damage • If toes or fingers are involved may lose these extremities.
<p>"TRENCH FOOT"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itching of affected area • Reddish-blue color to area • Swelling • Pain • Blistering resembling blisters from a burn • Injured area becomes sensitive to cold • No other permanent damage 	

The best way to prevent cold-related injury is to dress warmly and go indoors once your fingers or toes begin to feel cold. Always keep your hands and feet dry and your ears covered. The best way to warm a frozen part or one that has a chilblain or trench foot is to put it into a tub of hot water (104°-108° F) **Make sure to test the temperature of the water with a thermometer or a hand that is not frozen.** If you have a true frostbite injury or any blistering you should be seen by a doctor for care.

All information is for education only, and not intended to overrule your primary care physician.