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## **Check on Neighbors During Extreme Cold**

Exposure to cold temperatures, whether indoors or outside, can cause serious or life-threatening health problems. Infants and the elderly are particularly at risk, but anyone can be affected.

Many homes will be too cold – either due to a power failure or because insulation or the heating system isn't adequate for the weather. If you have a neighbor you think might be at risk for exposure to cold, even in their home, please check on them.

### **Recognizing Hypothermia**

Warnings signs of hypothermia:

#### **Adults:**

- shivering, exhaustion
- confusion, fumbling hands
- memory loss, slurred speech
- drowsiness

#### **Infants:**

- bright red, cold skin
- very low energy

### **What to Do**

If you notice any of these signs, take the person's temperature. If it is below 95°, the situation is an emergency – get medical attention immediately.

If medical care is not available, begin warming the person, as follows:

- Get the victim into a warm room or shelter.
- If the victim has on any wet clothing, remove it.
- Warm the center of the body first – chest, neck, head, and groin – using an electric blanket, if available. Or use skin-to-skin contact under loose, dry layers of blankets, clothing, towels, or sheets.
- Warm beverages can help increase the body temperature, but do not give alcoholic beverages. Do not try to give beverages to an unconscious person.
- After body temperature has increased, keep the person dry and wrapped in a warm blanket, including the head and neck.
- Get medical attention as soon as possible.

A person with severe hypothermia may be unconscious and may not seem to have a pulse or to be breathing. In this case, handle the victim gently, and get emergency assistance immediately.

The emergency tips outlined here are not a substitute for training in first aid. However, they will help you to know when to seek medical care and what to do until help becomes available.

For more information, go to [www.in.gov/dhs](http://www.in.gov/dhs).

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