

## FIRST AID FACT SHEET

# Cold-induced Condition

Cold-induced conditions occur when the body's core temperature drops below 35°C.

The body's natural reaction is to prevent body heat escaping and does this by shutting down blood vessels in the skin.

### Caused by

- + The fall in body temperature.
- + If not recognised in the early stages, it has the potential to develop into a serious condition.

### Signs & symptoms

- + Feeling cold, shivering.
- + Clumsiness and slurred speech.
- + Apathy and irrational behaviour.

### When body temperature drops very low:

- + Shivering usually ceases.
- + Pulse may be difficult to find.
- + Heart rate may slow.
- + Level of consciousness continues to decline.
- + Unconsciousness.
- + Cardiac arrest may occur.

### What to do

1. Follow DRSABCD St John Action Plan.
2. Remove the casualty to a warm, dry place.
3. Protect the casualty and yourself from wind, rain, sleet, cold or wet ground.
4. Help the casualty to lie down in a comfortable position.
5. Handle the casualty as gently as possible and avoid excess activity or movement.
6. Remove any wet clothing.
7. Warm the casualty by:
  - + Placing between blankets, in a sleeping bag, or wrap in a thermal/emergency rescue blanket or similar and cover their head to maintain body heat; and/or
  - + Hot water bottles, heat packs may be applied to the casualty's neck, armpits and groin taking care to avoid burning the casualty. Body to body contact may be used if there are no other means available.
8. Aim to stop the temperature dropping any lower rather than attempt rapid rewarming:
  - + **DO NOT** use radiant heat such as fire or electric heater; and
  - + **DO NOT** rub affected areas.
9. Give casualty warm drinks if conscious. **DO NOT** give alcohol.
10. Urgent medical aid. Call **Triple Zero (000)** for an ambulance.



In a medical emergency  
call **Triple Zero (000)**

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