

# Hypothermia Stats and Facts



## FACTS

Risk factors for hypothermia include:

1. Exhaustion. Your tolerance for cold diminishes when you are fatigued.
2. Older age. The body's ability to regulate temperature and to sense cold may lessen with age.
3. Very young age. Children lose heat faster than adults do. They may not have the judgment to dress properly in cold weather or to get out of the cold when they should.
4. Mental problems. People with a mental illness, dementia or other conditions that interfere with judgment may not dress appropriately for the weather or understand the risk of cold weather.
5. Alcohol and drug use. Alcohol may make your body feel warm inside, but it causes your blood vessels to expand, resulting in more rapid heat loss from the surface of your skin.
6. Certain medical conditions. Some health disorders affect your body's ability to regulate body temperature. Examples include an underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism), poor nutrition or anorexia nervosa, diabetes, stroke, severe arthritis, Parkinson's disease, trauma, and spinal cord injuries.
7. Medications. Some drugs can change the body's ability to regulate its temperature. Examples include certain

antidepressants, antipsychotics, narcotic pain medications and sedatives.

## STATS

- Hypothermia is the cause of at least 1,500 deaths a year in the United States. It is more common in older people and males.
- An average of 15 cold-related deaths, 150 emergency department visits, and 255 hospital admissions occur each year during the cold season (October through April).
- About 70% of cold-related deaths occurred after exposure to cold outdoors including on subway stations or platforms.
- According to the data, adults ages 40 to 84 are at higher risk of dying from hypothermia compared to other age groups.
- During the period of interest, the vast majority of the deceased were white, representing 80 % of all hypothermia-related deaths.
- Hypothermia, a preventable lowering of the core body temperature to  $<95^{\circ}\text{ F}$  ( $<35^{\circ}\text{ C}$ ), causes approximately 600 deaths each year in the United States.
- The CDC found too much cold has a worse effect on life than the heat has had. 800+ people died because of hypothermia, while less than 400 people died from hyperthermia (WP).