

Information about Frostbite or Frostnip



Be sure that your child is dressed for this cold Minnesota winter weather. It is dangerous to be outside without hats, mittens/gloves or a warm jacket.

Frostbite occurs when skin is exposed to extreme cold for an extended period of time. Ice crystals form under the skin, causing damage to skin and muscle tissue.

Frostnip is a superficial freezing of the outer layer of the skin - also can occur if you are exposed to cold weather. The skin turns white as blood circulation decreases, then stings, and becomes quite painful.

Common places seen:

- Nose
- Cheeks
- Ears
- Fingers
- Toes



Symptoms:

- Numbness, tingling, or burning feeling
- The skin also changes color when exposed to extreme cold. It blanches, then may appear red, and finally white-purple if allowed to freeze
- Blisters may form
- Areas feel cold and numb

Treatment:

- Child needs to be taken to a warm place immediately. Hands/fingers can be placed under the pit of the arms to start the warming process
- If possible, warm the affected area by immersing the affected part in LUKEWARM water for up to an hour
- Elevate the affected area slightly to reduce swelling
- If legs or feet involved, do not allow child to walk
- Seek medical help for any severe case of frostbite

DO NOT:

- DO NOT rub the affected area
- DO NOT apply heat lamp or hot water bottles
- DO NOT break any blisters
- DO NOT apply any tight dressing that causes pressure or reduces circulation to the area



Prevention Tips:

- Mittens are warmer than gloves. Gloves or mittens **MUST BE WORN** in very cold weather
- Caps are a must (50% of the heat is lost from the head)
- Wool is better insulator than down-filled items
- Dressing in “layers” is a good idea for Minnesota
- Make attempt to close any gap in outerwear where snow might become trapped next to the skin
- No open-toed or canvas shoes in the winter, please
- Boots help eliminate frostbite
- Wear thick warm socks rather than thin nylon or synthetic fiber ones. (wool socks are great)