

WellnessWatch



Welcome to the December issue of **WellnessWatch** -- The Starr Group's monthly digest featuring the latest **#wellness** trends and **#fitness** buzz. *Be well!*



Topic of the Month: **FROSTBITE**

Although December 21st marks the Winter Solstice in the Northern hemisphere, snowy weather has already hit Wisconsin as early as October 31 this year. For those of us who grew up here, that's par for the course.

So, now that we are officially entering the long, winter months, it's a good time to remember that exposure to extreme cold for long periods of time without adequate protective clothing can increase the chance of frostbite.

You'll want to bundle up, but not too tightly!



Did you know?



- According to Oxford Academic, people treated in for exposure to cold spend on average **10.1 days** in hospitals.
- Risks dramatically increase in temperatures below 5 degrees Fahrenheit, even in low winds.
- According to the National Trauma Data Bank (NTDB), **81.1%** of frostbite cases are male. Webmd.com reports they are between the ages of 30 to 40.
- In the U.S., nearly 200,000 cases of Frostbite are reported each year.
- Nearly **1,301** people die each year due to exposure to excessive natural cold and many more suffer serious thermal injury.



KNOW THE SYMPTOMS:

Frostbite mostly affects small, exposed body parts such as fingers, toes and the nose. With frostbite, skin gets very cold, then numb, hard and pale. Mild cases can usually be self-diagnosed and can be treated with gradual warming. Severe cases require treatment by a medical professional to prevent complications.¹

- Frostnip: 1st Degree Frostbite: irritated skin,
- Superficial: 2nd Degree Frostbite: burning, numbness, tingling, blisters but no major skin damage;
- Deep (Severe): 3rd Degree Frostbite: decrease in sensation, permanently damages all layers of skin. ²

WHAT TO DO:

If it is frostbite rather than frostnip, seek medical attention immediately.³

- Get into a warm room and remove restrictive jewelry and wet clothing.
- If medical care is not available, soak area in warm-to-the-touch (not hot!) water or wash cloth for 20-30 minutes.
- Use body heat to warm areas (try holding fingers under your arms)
- DO NOT rub or massage the area; DO NOT walk on frost-bitten toes; DO NOT use a heating pad or stove to warm up because frost-bitten areas are easily damaged or burned.



Get involved!



Here are more resources to help you stay safe in the cold:

1. Frostbite Symptoms and Causes; <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/frostbite/symptoms-causes/syc-20372656>
2. What are Symptoms of Frostbite?;
https://www.emedicinehealth.com/frostbite/article_em.htm#what_are_the_symptoms_of_frostbite
3. <https://health-wellness.cheshiremed.org/fighting-frostbite-hypothermia-what-you-need-to-know/>
4. Dress for Cold Weather Infographic: Weather in Wisconsin; <https://www.weather.gov/grb/winter0>
5. Older adults weather safety; <https://aging.ohio.gov/News/winter-safety-awareness-week-2019>
6. Be aware of the dangers of hypothermia. <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-01-ways-heart-safe-shoveling.html>
7. <https://academic.oup.com/jbcr/article-abstract/39/5/780/4705831?redirectedFrom=fulltext>



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