

Hypothermia occurs when the body's core temperature drops below 35°C (95°F), potentially becoming life-threatening. While often caused by cold weather, it can also develop in cool, wet, or windy conditions. The body normally regulates temperature through shivering and blood vessel constriction, but in cold environments, heat loss can exceed production. Hypothermia progresses in stages, from mild (shivering, confusion) to severe (loss of coordination, unconsciousness). Anyone can be affected, but older adults, young children, people with medical conditions, and those under the influence of drugs or alcohol are more vulnerable. Early signs include shivering, confusion, fumbling hands, and drowsiness. Severe hypothermia can lead to an absence of shivering, unconsciousness, and a slow, irregular heartbeat. Prevention includes wearing layered, waterproof clothing, staying dry, and minimizing wind exposure. If hypothermia occurs, immediate warming with blankets and warm fluids is crucial, and medical treatment may be required in severe cases.