



# Symptoms of hypothermia

The symptoms of hypothermia can vary depending on whether it is mild, moderate or severe. The severity of hypothermia is determined by how low your body temperature has become.

## Mild hypothermia

The early symptoms of hypothermia are often recognised by a parent or carer. This is because hypothermia can cause confusion, poor judgement and a change in behaviour which means the affected may not realise that they have it.

If someone has mild hypothermia (generally with a body temperature of 32-35°C), the symptoms aren't always obvious but they can include:

- constant shivering
- tiredness
- low energy
- cold or pale skin
- fast breathing (hyperventilation)

## Moderate hypothermia

Moderate cases of hypothermia (generally with a body temperature of 28-32°C) can include symptoms such as:

- violent, uncontrollable shivering (although shivering can stop completely at lower temperatures as the body is unable to generate heat)
- being unable to think or pay attention
- confusion (some people don't realise they're affected)
- loss of judgement and reasoning (someone with hypothermia may decide to remove clothing despite being very cold)
- difficulty moving around
- loss of co-ordination
- drowsiness
- slurred speech
- slow, shallow breathing (hypoventilation)

## Severe hypothermia

The symptoms of severe hypothermia (a body temperature of below 28°C) can include:

- unconsciousness (comatose)
- shallow or no breathing
- weak, irregular or no pulse
- dilated pupils

The individual may in fact appear to be dead. However, under these circumstances the individual must be taken to hospital in order for it to be decided whether they have died, or are in a state of severe hypothermia. If this is the case, advanced medical intervention may still be able to resuscitate them.

## When to seek medical attention

If you suspect hypothermia, seek medical attention. If you suspect that someone has severe hypothermia, dial **999** immediately to request an ambulance. Severe hypothermia is life threatening.