First aid fact sheet

Hypothermia

• DO NOT rub affected areas.
• DO NOT use radiant heat such as fire or electric heaters.
• DO NOT give alcohol.

Signs and symptoms

Mild
• feeling cold
• shivering
• clumsiness and slurred speech
• apathy and irrational behaviour

Severe
• shivering ceases
• difficult to find pulse
• slow heart rate
• loss of consciousness

What to do
1. Follow DRSABCD.
2. Move the patient to a warm, dry place.
3. Help the patient to lie down in a comfortable position. Handle the patient as gently as possible, avoiding excess activity and movement.
4. Remove any wet clothing from the patient.
5. Place the patient between blankets or in a sleeping bag, and wrap them in an emergency blanket.
6. Cover the patient’s head to maintain body heat.
7. Give the patient warm drinks if they are conscious. Do not give alcohol.
8. Place hot water bottles, heat packs and other sources of external heat directly on the patient’s neck, armpits and groin. Be careful to avoid burns. Body-to-body contact can be used if other means of rewarming are not available.
9. If hypothermia is severe, call Triple Zero (000) for an ambulance.
10. Stay with the patient until medical aid arrives.

In a medical emergency call Triple Zero (000)

DRSABCD Danger ▶ Response ▶ Send for help ▶ Airway ▶ Breathing ▶ CPR ▶ Defibrillation

You could save a life with first aid training • www.stjohn.org.au • 1300 360 455

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