

## Frostbite

### What is frostbite?

Frostbite is damage to skin and deeper tissues from exposure to the cold.

### What are the signs of frostbite?

Skin that is:

- red, swollen, or blistered
- tingly, numb, or painful
- cold and white

### How should I care for my child?

Remove any wet clothing, being careful not to rub against the frostbitten areas. Put the frostbitten area in warm water (never hot) until the usual skin color and temperature return, about 30 minutes.

Keep the rest of the body warm with blankets.

**Do not** use dry heat to warm the area.

**Do not** rub snow on the area.

**Do not** rub or massage the area.

Give acetaminophen (Tylenol® or another brand) as directed for comfort.

### When should I call the clinic?

Call right away if:

- body temperature is less than 95° F
- severe or prolonged exposure to cold, especially if your child is also wet
- blisters are on the frostbitten areas
- frostbitten area is very large
- color of the skin doesn't return to normal after 1 hour of warming
- your child acts confused or very sick

### What else to I need to know?

To help prevent frostbite, teach your child to:

- dress in layers and wear a hat in cold weather
- watch for signs of frostbite and come indoors if they happen

### Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call the clinic.

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our Web site: [www.childrensmn.org](http://www.childrensmn.org).

Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota  
Patient/Family Education  
2525 Chicago Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
3/09 ©Copyright