



Thunder Bay District
Health Unit
www.tbdhu.com

THE FACTS: Frostbite

When outside in cold temperature for long periods of time, your skin and underlying tissues may freeze, resulting in frostbite. Frostbite occurs most often in hands, feet, nose or ears

What does it look and feel like?

- Skin turns red, then blue, then grey or white
- Skin feels cold and painful
- Tingling, numbness, or burning sensation may occur
- Skin might look swollen, pale and waxy

What to do

- Get out of the cold
- Remove all wet clothes and put on dry ones
- Warm your hands by tucking them under your arms. If your nose, ears or face is frostbitten, warm the area by covering it with dry, gloved hands.
- Don't rub the affected area. This could cause further tissue damage
- Don't use direct heat (heating pad, hot water) to warm the area. Put frostbitten hands or feet in water slightly above body temperature
- Know what to expect as skin thaws. If the skin turns red and there's a tingling and burning sensation as it warms, circulation is returning. If numbness or sustained pain remains during warming, seek emergency medical care.

