Frostbite: In Short

Frostbite is the damage caused to your body tissues due to overexposure to extreme cold climate.

Your skin and flesh start to freeze at around -2°C and frostbite can occur in less than thirty seconds. Your blood vessels start to constrict to form a protective shield to prevent further heat loss from your body.

This is a natural reaction of your body but can lead to tissue damage, often permanent in nature that includes blocked blood circulation, dead skin cells, blood clots or burst arteries.

Frostbites affect tissues that are exposed to cold temperatures and can involve your ears, nose, fingers and toes.

Effective First Aid Treatment for Frostbite

Minor frostbites respond well to frostbite treatment. First make sure there is no wide spread damage to tissues, or whether the frostbite has penetrated deep into the skin layers and caused substantial damage. If so, immediately call for emergency medical help while applying these first aid measures.

Frostbite First Aid Tips:

- Avoid walking on feet that are frostbitten
- Avoid applying massage to frostbite area
- Avoid using hot water to treat frostbite
- Avoid using stimulants like caffeine or nicotine as these can cause further tissue damage
- Drink warm sugar rich fluids
- Keep frostbite affected part at an elevated level

First aid for frostbite is beneficial for superficial frostnip that generally heal well when compared to freezing of deeper layers of skin following a frostbite, which can cause permanent damage.

If you find that the skin has turned deep purple or black in color or has started to develop blisters, start frostbite first aid treatment and call for emergency medical help.