**CAP health & wellness handout: HYPOTHERMIA**

**Overview:**

What is hypothermia?

Normal body temperature is between 98.0 and 99.0, with a mean of about 98.6 F (37 C)

* Mild hypothermia: Core temperature 95 F (35 C)
* Moderate hypothermia: Core temperature 89.6 F (32 C)
* Severe hypothermia: Core temperature less than 82.4 F (28 C)

## **Ways we lose heat:**

* Evaporation
* Radiation
* Conduction
* Convection

**Dress for success:**

* Dress in layers:

1. Wicking layer next to the skin
2. Insulating layer
3. Wind and water-resistant layer

**Things that may predispose towards Hypothermia:**

In regions with cold and snowy winters, locals have learned to thrive in that climate and know how to dress for the weather. Hypothermia is more likely to affect those:

* Who suffer an accidental injury
* Whose vehicle becomes stuck or stalled
* Those who are impaired by alcohol, drugs, or other medical issues

In more temperate climates, hypothermia is more likely the result of misadventure, such as going hiking without checking the weather on a Spring weekend and becoming lost or delayed by an injury complicated by a sudden rainstorm. Several things can increase the risk of hypothermia:

* Poor planning
* Adverse weather
* Inadequate preparation

**Recognizing hypothermia**

* Altered mental state:
  + Normal mental status: not hypothermic
  + Able to care for themselves, but slowed: Mild hypothermia
  + Conscious but disoriented: Moderate hypothermia
  + Not shivering and possibly unconscious: Severe hypothermia
* Shivering
* Pulse and Breathing: check vital signs for one full minute, make sure that your own hands are warm enough, recognizing the difficulty taking a pulse with cold fingers.
  + Slowed pulse under 60
  + Slow and shallow breathing

**Recommendations*:***

**Treatment of Hypothermia:**

* Protect patient from further exposure
* Keep the patient horizontal
* Remove wet clothing if dry clothing, dry sleeping bag, and/or shelter is available
* Active external rewarming (fire, close body contact)
* Warm liquids and food
* Transport patient on a litter
* They ain’t dead til they’re warm and dead!