Hypothermia
Hypothermia occurs when the body’s temperature falls below 35 °C. Hypothermia can occur in any situation where the body is losing more heat to the environment than it is generating. Severe hypothermia is life-threatening without prompt medical attention.

Hypothermia occurs when the body’s temperature falls below 35 °C. The human body has a number of systems that maintain a constant core temperature of around 37 °C. A person doesn’t have to be in sub zero temperatures to risk hypothermia – it only requires the environmental temperature to be less than the body temperature and a person will “donate” heat to the atmosphere.

If the heat generated by the body – and people are constantly generating heat through metabolic processes and muscle movements – is less than that lost to the environment, then their temperature will begin to fall.

The four ways that the human body loses heat include:

- **Conduction** – by direct transfer from the body to an object that is cooler than the body (for example, lying on a cold surface will pass body warmth to the surface away from the body)
- **Convection** – air or liquid flow across the skin drawing off heat (for example, wind will increase heat loss, as will water that is cooler than body temperature)
- **Radiation** – electromagnetic waves distribute heat into the ambient environment (for example, exposed skin will allow heat to be drawn off if the air temperature is less than the body – the exposed head of a person is a strong source of heat loss, particularly in children)
- **Evaporation** – fluid on the skin turns to vapour, drawing off heat (moist skin will lose heat more rapidly, such as in someone who is wet, clammy or has exposed moist skin, such as burns).

Sometimes, medical conditions can lead to hypothermia. For example, someone suffering a stroke or a person with diabetes suffering a hypoglycaemic episode may end up lying immobile for a period of time, unable to protect themselves from hypothermia.

The natural response to becoming cold is two-fold, including:

- **Behavioural** – the person will try and move around to generate heat, and seek shelter from further heat loss.
- **Physiological** – the body shunts blood to the core to keep it warm, hair stands on end to trap a layer of warm air around us (goose bumps), we shiver to make more heat and our body releases hormones to speed up our metabolism to create more heat.

If these measures don’t work, hypothermia will result.

### Symptoms of hypothermia

Hypothermia can be distinguished into three stages – mild, moderate or severe. The signs and symptoms of hypothermia can be approximately grouped with the temperature ranges of the different stages:

For mild hypothermia (35-32 °C), signs and symptoms include:

- pale and cool to touch as blood vessels constrict in the skin
- numbness in the extremities
- sluggish responses, drowsiness or lethargic
- shivering
- increased heart rate and breathing.

For moderate hypothermia (32-28 °C), signs and symptoms include:

- decreasing conscious state
- may have been incontinent of urine as a result of an increased workload on the kidneys related to blood being shunted to the major organs
- no longer shivering
- slowed heart rate, breathing rate and low blood pressure.

For severe hypothermia (below 28 °C), signs and symptoms include:

- unconscious and no longer responding
- the heart beats more slowly and may become irregular before ultimately stopping if the person gets too cold
- no response to light in the pupil of the eye
- rigid muscles – the person might feel like they are in rigor mortis
- pulses and respiratory effort may be present but hard to detect.

### Myth about hypothermia
One hypothermia myth is that you lose more heat through your head than any other part of your body. This is not true. Heat loss occurs through any area of skin exposed to the environment. An adult head is approximately 10 per cent of the surface area of their whole body.

Most of the time, the rest of our bodies are covered, with the possible exception of our hands (which together only make up about four per cent of our surface area), so we feel cold, because our head is cold compared to the rest of our insulated body.

If a person had to expose another part of their body – for example, their abdomen, which also makes up about 10 per cent of an average adult body – then they would lose as much heat through that as their exposed head.

Parents are often advised to keep children’s heads covered to stop them getting cold, but this isn’t to do with any special heat-losing properties of the head. It has more to do with the relative size of the head to the body. At birth, a baby’s head makes up over 20 per cent of their total surface area, so exposing that skin leads to increased heat loss, putting them at risk of hypothermia much quicker than an adult, if they were to both have their heads uncovered.

Risk factors for hypothermia

Factors that may increase a person’s susceptibility to hypothermia include:

- **Children** – small children are at risk of hypothermia because they are unable to protect themselves in varied environmental conditions. They also have a faster rate of heat loss than adults, generally speaking. Due to their large head relative to their body, they also need their heads covered to prevent significant heat loss.

- **Old age** – in the elderly, the ability to notice changes in temperature is impaired due to the loss of nerve endings to the skin. They also have less fat, which has an insulating function, and a lower metabolic rate, and so generate less heat themselves. Social factors also play a part, as the elderly are more likely to be reluctant to use heating for economic reasons, and they may be socially isolated so can be alone for long periods of time with no one noticing as they deteriorate.

- **Dementia or immobilising illness** – anybody who is unable to look after themselves independently, either physically or cognitively, is at risk of hypothermia. People with dementia can be particularly at risk if they wander off in cold conditions without having protected themselves with appropriate clothing first.

- **Alcohol and other drugs** – alcohol makes people feel cozy because it relaxes the blood vessels, allowing more blood to flow near the skin, providing a flushed appearance and a warm sensation. This also puts people who are drunk at significant risk of hypothermia if they are outside in cold weather, as this increases the rate of heat loss. It also slows down the metabolism, so slows down internal heat generation. Alcohol also impairs judgement, so the person is less likely to recognise the environment and their own physical condition, and less likely to take protective measures against heat loss. This is also a concern with any other mind-altering substance.

- **Water immersion** – people who spend any time immersed in water that is colder than body temperature will suffer significant heat loss. The other person at risk is anyone who may have been in wet clothes for a prolonged period of time, either due to incontinence or sweating.

Severe hypothermia is life-threatening

Mild hypothermia (32–35 °C body temperature) is usually easy to treat. However, the risk of death increases as the core body temperature drops below 32 °C.

If core body temperature is lower than 28 °C, the condition is life-threatening without immediate medical attention. Under this temperature, a person will be very cold to touch, unresponsive, rigid, not breathing, have no pulse, and their pupils will be fixed (they will not respond to light changes). They will appear to be dead, but they may not be.

First aid for severe hypothermia

First aid steps for severe hypothermia include:

- **In an emergency, call triple zero (000).**
- While waiting for help to arrive, monitor the person’s breathing. If they have severe hypothermia, their breathing may become dangerously slow or shallow, or they may cease breathing.
- Begin cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) immediately if the person shows no signs of life – if they are not breathing normally, are unconscious or unresponsive, or not moving.

Never assume a person is dead. A person with severe hypothermia may only take one breath per minute, with a heart rate of less than 20 beats per minute. Always assume they are alive.

First aid for all cases of hypothermia

The first aid tips that apply to all stages of hypothermia include:

- The first step in all cases of hypothermia is to prevent any further heat loss. This is done by removing the four ways that heat loss occurs mentioned earlier, including:
  - Conduction – remove the person from a cold surface if possible. Ideally, place them onto a warm surface, or at least a dry one that will prevent further heat loss.
  - Convection – remove the person from a windy or wet environment. Covering with blankets is good, but the aim must be to get them to shelter.
  - Radiation – Cover as much of the person as possible to avoid radiant heat loss. Particularly cover the head of a younger child.
  - Evaporation – wet and sweaty people will suffer evaporative heat loss. Dry skin where possible and remove wet clothing as soon as practicable.
- Don’t massage or rub the person – and do not allow them to help you. Keep them still because, particularly below 32 °C, they risk a cardiac arrest.
- Move the person out of the cold – if this is not possible, protect them from wind, cover their head and insulate their body from the cold ground. If the person is moderately or severely hypothermic, move them as gently as possible. Below approximately 30 °C the heart is very vulnerable and there are case studies of simple movements like rolling the person over prompting a cardiac arrest.
- Remove wet clothing – replace with a dry covering, preferably warm. Cover the person’s head.
- Try to warm the person – do not use hot water immersion. Make sure that the person is dry. Insulate them from the environment to retain whatever heat they are producing. Use whatever heat source is available – heaters, hot water bottles, heat packs, an electric blanket – to begin slowly warming the person. The heat source should not be too hot or too close to the person. A slow and gradual warming is ideal and whatever heat source is used only has to be warmer than the person to be doing heat. When applying heat close to the skin – such as with hot water bottles or heat packs – be careful not to make them too hot, as the

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
person may have impaired sensation to their skin and is at risk of suffering burns. If using multiple small sources of heat, such as heat packs, preferentially pack them around the torso, into armpits and the groin to focus warming on the central area. Share body heat – to warm the person’s body, remove your clothing and lie next to the person, making skin-to-skin contact. Then cover both bodies with a blanket or get into a sleeping bag if possible.

- Don’t give alcohol – it lowers the body’s ability to retain heat. If the person is alert and is able to swallow, have them drink warm, non-alcoholic beverages. Do not offer liquids if they are vomiting.
- Do not leave the person alone – stay with them at all times.
- Continually monitor breathing – if the person’s breathing stops, start cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) immediately if you are trained. If unsure, dial triple zero (000) – operators will advise you what to do. Continue CPR until the person starts breathing on their own or until medical help arrives.
- Don’t assume the person is dead – CPR can be lifesaving for a person with severe hypothermia who may appear to be dead. They may not be breathing, have no pulse, be cold to touch, have fixed pupils and be rigid – but they may still be alive.

**Preventing hypothermia when outdoors**

Exposure to cold weather, even for a short time, can be dangerous if you are not prepared. Shivering and feeling cold or numb are warning signs that the body is losing too much heat.

Simple ways to prevent hypothermia include:

- Avoid prolonged exposure to cold weather.
- Be alert to weather conditions that may increase the risk of hypothermia and act accordingly. For example, seek shelter during a snowstorm.
- If driving through a cold weather environment, particularly if there is a risk of ice or snow on the road increasing the chances of a crash, do not rely on the vehicle heater to stay warm while driving. Dress for the weather outside the car and leave the heater turned down so that in the event that you are incapacitated by an accident or snowstorm, you have a better chance of avoiding hypothermia.
- Wear several layers of clothing to trap body heat, rather than just one bulky layer. Natural fibres like wool are better at holding heat.
- Use a weatherproof outer layer to stay dry.
- Use gloves, scarves and socks, with spares to replace when wet.
- Wear insulated boots.
- Wear warm headgear.
- Make sure your clothes and boots aren’t too tight. If your blood circulation is restricted, you are more prone to hypothermia.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Eat regularly.
- Take regular breaks to reduce the risk of physical fatigue.
- Keep your eye on exact body temperature by taking a clinical thermometer in your first aid kit.
- Avoid alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine.
- Make sure your kit includes a good supply of waterproof matches.

**Use a buddy system**

When participating in any outdoor activity that has the potential risk of hypothermia, such as bushwalking or mountaineering, use the ‘buddy system’ and check each other for warning signs. You may not be able to recognise your own symptoms of hypothermia due to mental confusion. First aid training is strongly advised.

**Hypothermia at home**

Hypothermia can occur in the home. The elderly and some people with medical conditions are more susceptible to hypothermia. The risk can be reduced by:

- making sure there is adequate heat in the home
- seeking assistance from government agencies for help with heating, food and clothing if necessary
- having regular medical check-ups.

**Where to get help**

- In an emergency, call triple zero (000)
- Your doctor
- The emergency department of your nearest hospital

**References**

- Hypothermia (pdf), St John Ambulance Australia.

**Send us your feedback**
1/4 How would you rate this website?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

Next Submit Now Cancel

Send us your feedback

- Rate this website
- Your comments
- Questions
- Your details

Please note that we cannot answer personal medical queries. If you are looking for health or medical advice we recommend that you:

- talk to your doctor or pharmacist
- dial triple zero (000) in an emergency
- ring NURSE-ON-CALL Tel. 1300 60 60 24.

2/4 Your Comments

Tell us who you are  
Select an option

Enter your comments below (optional)

Next Submit Now Cancel

Send us your feedback

- Rate this website
- Your comments
- Questions
- Your details

3/4 Questions

What are you here to do?  
Looking for information on

Did you find what you were looking for?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Next Submit Now Cancel

Send us your feedback

- Rate this website
- Your comments
- Questions
- Your details

4/4 Your details

Postcode

Email Address

Submit Now Cancel

Send us your feedback

Thank you. Your feedback has been successfully sent.

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
More information
Safety
The following content is displayed as Tabs. Once you have activated a link navigate to the end of the list to view its associated content. The activated link is defined as Active Tab

- Safety basics
  - Child safety
  - Safety in and around the home
  - Safe lifestyle and entertainment
  - Outdoor, weather and sports safety
  - Travel and transport safety
- Fire, flood and other disasters
- Work and environmental safety
- Farm safety

Safety basics

- Bites and stings – first aid
  - If you are bitten or stung by an insect or animal, apply first aid and seek medical treatment as soon as possible...

- How to survive a rip current (video)
  - Learn what to do if you find yourself in a rip current...

- Ladder safety matters – Mick (video)
  - Stop and think before you use a ladder...

- Ladder safety matters – Nick (video)
  - Stop and think before you use a ladder...

- Ladders Safety Matters - Paul (video)
  - We can keep our pools safe, healthy, and most importantly fun...

- Look after your health at harvest time (slideshow)
  - Farmer health, wellbeing and safety are often neglected when facing the pressures of harvest. Simple safety measures can dramatically reduce the risk of injury and illness...

Child safety

- Animals and child safety
  - Children should always be closely supervised near animals and taught how to behave safely around pets...

- Babies and safety
  - Most injuries to babies do not occur by chance - many are predictable and largely preventable...

- Baby care - moving from cot to bed
  - Some children are unsettled the first few nights in a 'big bed'. Try to be patient, loving and reassuring...

- Baby furniture - safety tips
  - Even if your baby furniture meets every safety standard and recommendation, your child still needs close supervision...

- Bicycle safety and children
  - As they grow and develop, and with the help of adults, children become increasingly aware of how they can manage their own safety and become safer road and bicycle users...

- Burns and scalds - children
  - Most hot tap water scald injuries to children happen in the bathroom...

- Child safety and injury prevention
  - By making a few practical changes to your home, you can dramatically reduce the risk of injury to your child...

- Child safety in the car
  - Taking care to restrain children correctly while travelling in a car is the best way to prevent injuries...
Eating tips for young toddlers
Children have a natural ability to sense when they are hungry and when they are full.

Farm safety – children
Children who live on farms are at greater risk of injury and death than their parents or other farm workers.

Hot weather and child safety
Babies and children can quickly lose body fluids in hot weather, which can lead to dehydration.

Internet safety for children
A child’s digital footprint can be as easy to follow as their real footprints.

Look after your health at harvest time (slide show)
Farmer health, wellbeing and safety are often neglected when facing the pressures of harvest. Simple safety measures can dramatically reduce the risk of injury and illness.

Mobile phone safety for children
Teach your child strategies for responding to mobile phone bullying.

Playgrounds and child safety
Play environments can be safe and beneficial for your child. With proper planning, you can make sure your child gets plenty of playtime activity.

Poisoning and child safety
Call the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26 immediately if you suspect your child has been poisoned or given the wrong medicine or the wrong dose of medicine.

Road and traffic safety for children
As they grow and develop, and with the help of adults, children become increasingly aware of how they can manage their own safety, and become safer road users.

Scooters and child safety
Scooters can travel at fast speeds and falls and collisions are disturbingly common.

Water safety for children
Toddlers are most at risk of drowning because they are mobile and curious but don’t understand the danger of water.

Safety in and around the home

Animals and child safety
Children should always be closely supervised near animals and taught how to behave safely around pets.

Asbestos in the home
Asbestos fibres breathed into the lungs can cause a range of health problems including lung cancer and mesothelioma.

Chemicals in the home
Learn how to safely store and dispose of household chemicals, and how to respond when a person is poisoned.

Electric shock
Always disconnect the power supply before trying to help a victim of electric shock.

Gas heating - health and safety issues
If you service your gas heater regularly and use it correctly, it will be safe and economical to use.

Greywater - recycling water at home
When handled properly, greywater can be safely reused for the garden.

Groundwater
Groundwater quality varies across Victoria, in some areas, groundwater is not suitable for use.

Ladder safety matters – Mick (video)
Stop and think before you use a ladder.

Ladder safety matters – Nick (video)
Stop and think before you use a ladder...

- **Ladder Safety – Mick’s story**
  Injuries associated with ladder falls have been steadily increasing in Australia, especially among men aged 60 years and older doing work in and around the home...

- **Ladder Safety – Nick’s story**
  Injuries associated with ladder falls have been steadily increasing in Australia, especially among men aged 60 years and older doing work in and around the home...

- **Ladder Safety – Paul’s story**
  Paul was sanding the exterior of his house when he overreached and fell more than two metres from his ladder...

- **Ladders Safety Matters - Paul (video)**
  We can keep our pools safe, healthy, and most importantly fun...

- **Look after your health at harvest time (slideshow)**
  Farmer health, wellbeing and safety are often neglected when facing the pressures of harvest. Simple safety measures can dramatically reduce the risk of injury and illness...

- **Medicines - safety issues**
  Make sure your doctor knows about every medicine you take, including vitamins...

- **Older people – preventing falls at home**
  Falls are a major cause of injury for older people. Find out how you can prevent falls around your home...

- **Pest control in the home**
  If you use pesticides to control pests around the house, make sure you use as little as possible...

- **Vision loss - safety around the home**
  There are many ways to improve home safety for people whose vision is deteriorating...

- **Water quality in tanks, bores and dams**
  Make sure your private drinking water supply is safe...

- **Water safety for children**
  Toddlers are most at risk of drowning because they are mobile and curious but don't understand the danger of water...

**Safe lifestyle and entertainment**

- **Internet safety for children**
  A child's digital footprint can be as easy to follow as their real footprints...

- **Mobile phone safety for children**
  Teach your child strategies for responding to mobile phone bullying...

- **Partying safely – tips for teenagers**
  Don't advertise a party via SMS or the internet to limit the risk of gate-crashers and violent situations...

- **Solariums (sunbeds and tanning beds)**
  There is no such thing as a safe solarium tan...

**Outdoor, weather and sports safety**

- **Exercise safety**
  Training too hard or fast is a common cause of sports-related injuries...

- **Heat stress and heat-related illness**
  Heat kills more Australians than any natural disaster. Find out how you can treat and prevent heat-related illness...

- **Heat stress and older people**
  People aged 65 years and over are at increased risk of heat-related illnesses and need special care in hot weather...

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Heat stress – preventing heatstroke

Heatstroke is a life-threatening emergency that can be avoided by following simple prevention measures.

Hot weather and child safety

Babies and children can quickly lose body fluids in hot weather, which can lead to dehydration.

How to cope and stay safe in extreme heat

Know the effects of extreme heat, who is at risk and how you can prepare yourself and others.

How to survive a rip current (video)

Learn what to do if you find yourself in a rip current.

Hypothermia

The early responses to hypothermia will be moving around, seeking shelter, hair standing on end (goosebumps) and shivering.

Walking - safety and environmental issues

Choose a route that is appropriate for your age and fitness level. Warm up and cool down with a slow, gentle pace to ease in and out of your exercise session.

Water from natural resources

Drinking untreated water, such as creek water, bore water and sometimes even rainwater can lead to illnesses including gastroenteritis.

Water safety for children

Toddlers are most at risk of drowning because they are mobile and curious but don't understand the danger of water.

Travel and transport safety

Bicycle safety and children

As they grow and develop, and with the help of adults, children become increasingly aware of how they can manage their own safety and become safer road and bicycle users.

Child safety in the car

Taking care to restrain children correctly while travelling in a car is the best way to prevent injuries.

Look after your health at harvest time (slideshow)

Farmer health, wellbeing and safety are often neglected when facing the pressures of harvest. Simple safety measures can dramatically reduce the risk of injury and illness.

Motor vehicle crashes

Motor vehicle crashes continue to be one of the biggest killers and causes of injury in Victoria.

Road and traffic safety for children

As they grow and develop, and with the help of adults, children become increasingly aware of how they can manage their own safety, and become safer road users.

Safe driving

Safe driving is up to every individual on the road. You can be a safe driver by being alert and ready to take action at any time.

Scooters and child safety

Scooters can travel at fast speeds and falls and collisions are disturbingly common.

Travel safety tips

You can reduce your risk of being mugged or robbed while travelling by taking a few simple precautions.

Fire, flood and other disasters

After a flood – animal and insect related hazards

When returning to a flood-affected area, remember that wild animals, including rats, mice, snakes or spiders, may be trapped in your home, shed or garden.

After a flood – returning home safely

When returning to your home after a flood, take precautions to reduce the possibility of injury, illness or disease.

Bushfire aftermath - safety tips
Houses, sheds and other buildings or structures burnt in a bushfire can leave potential health hazards.

- **Bushfire preparation advice**
  Being prepared for a bushfire helps you cope better in an emergency.

- **Bushfire smoke**
  Bushfire smoke can reduce air quality in rural and urban areas, and may affect people’s health.

- **Emergencies - floods**
  You and your family should work out an emergency plan in case of flood.

- **Smoke from planned burns**
  Bushfire smoke can reduce air quality in rural and urban areas, and may affect people's health. Planned burns are an important part of reducing the risk of bushfires.

- **Talking to children about bushfire risk**
  Children can be affected by information regarding bushfire risk and they may become concerned about issues of safety. Talking to children openly in a way that suits their age, while also involving...

- **Urban flash floods - FAQs**
  Urban flash flooding can happen quickly and without warning. Heavy rain causes runoff to collect in dips, car parks and roads, and there is a risk of contamination, injury and disease.

### Work and environmental safety

- **Asbestos and your health**
  When asbestos fibres become airborne, people working with asbestos may inhale particles which remain in their lungs.

- **Cadmium**
  Low-level exposure to cadmium over a long period of time may cause health effects because cadmium can accumulate in the body.

- **Computer-related injuries**
  Using a computer can contribute to problems of the muscles and joints, eye strain and overuse injuries of the arms, wrists and hands.

- **Eye safety at work**
  Wearing eye protection appropriate for the task can significantly reduce the risk of injury.

- **Ladder safety matters – Mick (video)**
  Stop and think before you use a ladder.

- **Ladder safety matters – Nick (video)**
  Stop and think before you use a ladder.

- **Ladders Safety Matters - Paul (video)**
  We can keep our pools safe, healthy, and most importantly fun.

- **Look after your health at harvest time (slideshow)**
  Farmer health, wellbeing and safety are often neglected when facing the pressures of harvest. Simple safety measures can dramatically reduce the risk of injury and illness.

- **Q fever**
  Q fever is caused by a micro-organism that can be carried by cattle, sheep and goats.

- **Shiftwork**
  A person working the night shift is at greater risk of various disorders and accidents.

- **Skin cancer - protecting outdoor workers**
  People who work outdoors are in one of the highest risk groups for skin cancer.

- **Workplace conflict**
  A clash of personalities at work is bad for business, because it can affect productivity and increase absenteeism.

- **Workplace safety - confined spaces**

---

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Around 60 per cent of people killed in confined spaces were trying to rescue someone else.

- **Workplace safety - coping with a critical incident**
  Stress responses can develop over time after trauma, and support may be required by some workers or groups.

- **Workplace safety - dangerous goods**
  Dangerous goods are objects or substances that are potentially harmful to people or the environment, such as explosives or chemicals.

- **Workplace safety - hazardous substances**
  A hazardous substance can be inhaled, splashed onto the skin or eyes, or swallowed.

- **Workplace safety - infection control**
  The spread of many pathogens in the workplace can be prevented with regular hand washing.

- **Workplace safety - manual handling injuries**
  A person can be injured when handling objects in a variety of ways including pulling, pushing, holding or restraining.

- **Workplace safety - noise pollution**
  There are many ways to reduce exposure to excessive noise in the workplace.

- **Workplace safety - overuse injuries**
  Occupational overuse syndrome, also known as RSI, is caused by repetitive movements or awkward postures.

**Farm safety**

- **Chemicals and spray drift**
  Sprayed chemicals can drift over neighbouring properties or water sources, and can affect human health, animals or the environment.

- **Farm safety and handling agrochemicals**
  To reduce risks on the farm, use hazardous chemicals according to manufacturer guidelines or replace them with less dangerous options.

- **Farm safety – children**
  Children who live on farms are at greater risk of injury and death than their parents or other farm workers.

- **Farm safety - confined spaces**
  Any confined space on a farm can be dangerous and the threat may not be apparent until it's too late.

- **Farm safety - crush injuries**
  Hand and finger injuries are the most common crush injuries that occur on Victorian farms.

- **Farm safety - falls**
  Falls are a common farm hazard, especially for older farmers.

- **Farm safety - handling animals**
  Any animal-handling practices can increase the risk of injury to farmers, farm workers and the animal.

- **Farm safety - machinery**
  Poorly used or faulty machinery is a major cause of death and injury on farms.

- **Farm safety - manual handling**
  Farm workers often experience muscle and ligament strain, but good manual handling techniques and safe work habits can prevent most injuries.

- **Farm safety - quad bikes**
  Most injuries and deaths involving quad bikes (all-terrain vehicles) are caused by the bike rolling over the rider.

- **Farm safety - risks and hazards**
  Farms can be dangerous places for workers and family members, but the risks can be reduced.

- **Farm safety – sheep and shearing**
  Handling sheep can cause manual injuries and badly designed shearing sheds can present a range of hazards.

- **Look after your health at harvest time (slideshow)**

---

**betterhealth.vic.gov.au**
Farmer health, wellbeing and safety are often neglected when facing the pressures of harvest. Simple safety measures can dramatically reduce the risk of injury and illness.

Related Information

- **Heat stress and heat-related illness**
  Heat kills more Australians than any natural disaster. Find out how you can treat and prevent heat-related illness...

- **Heat stress and older people**
  People aged 65 years and over are at increased risk of heat-related illnesses and need special care in hot weather...

- **Heat stress – preventing heatstroke**
  Heatstroke is a life-threatening emergency that can be avoided by following simple prevention measures...

- **Snow sports and cold-related injuries**
  You can help reduce your risk of winter sports injuries with planning, preparation and proper equipment...

- **Hot weather and child safety**
  Babies and children can quickly lose body fluids in hot weather, which can lead to dehydration...

Home

Related information on other websites

- Mayo Clinic Online - Hypothermia.
- National Health Service Direct UK.

Content Partner

This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by: Ambulance Victoria

Last updated: July 2013

Page content currently being reviewed.

Content on this website is provided for information purposes only. Information about a therapy, service, product or treatment does not in any way endorse or support such therapy, service, product or treatment and is not intended to replace advice from your doctor or other registered health professional. The information and materials contained on this website are not intended to constitute a comprehensive guide concerning all aspects of the therapy, product or treatment described on the website. All users are urged to always seek advice from a registered health care professional for diagnosis and answers to their medical questions and to ascertain whether the particular therapy, service, product or treatment described on the website is suitable in their circumstances. The State of Victoria and the Department of Health & Human Services shall not bear any liability for reliance by any user on the materials contained on this website.

NURSE-ON-CALL

Provides immediate, expert health advice from a registered nurse. Call 1300 60 60 24

butterhealth.vic.gov.au