

## **COLD EXPOSURE - HYPOTHERMIA**

### **Definition:**

Patient presenting with signs and symptoms of moderate/severe hypothermia and altered level of consciousness progressing to unconsciousness and/or cardiac arrest. Body temperature above 90 degrees (F) (rectal) rarely require ALS intervention. Cardiac arrhythmias are uncommon at body temperature above 86 degrees (F). Be watchful of patients who may be mildly hypothermic.

### **MODERATE HYPOTHERMIA**

1. **OXYGEN** - High concentrations by reservoir mask, or;
  - Low concentrations by nasal cannula, prn
  - Assist ventilations – volume delivered should provide visible chest rise
1. **ECG MONITOR and Vital Signs**
2. **IV Access** - Lactated Ringer's - TKO Rate, Draw Baseline blood
3. **Move patient to a warm environment**
  - Remove wet clothing and cover with insulating materials.
4. **Use heat packs if available**
5. **Transport patient in recumbent position if possible**

### **SEVERE HYPOTHERMIA**

1. **Oxygen** - High concentrations by reservoir mask, or;
  - Low concentrations by nasal cannula, prn
  - Assist ventilations as indicated- volume delivered should provide visible chest rise
2. **Intubate** - if necessary - Verify tube placement, secure tube, ETCO2 monitoring
  - DO NOT HYPERVENTILATE - BAG AT A RATE OF 8 TO 10 BPM. Volume delivered should provide visible chest rise.
3. **ECG Monitor and Vital Signs** - Monitor cardiac rhythms
4. **CPR** - if necessary start CPR with Asystole, Ventricular Fibrillation and Pulseless Ventricular Tachycardia

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO DEFIBRILLATE OR START AN IV IN THIS SITUATION

5. **Move patient to a warm environment**

### **Cold Exposure – Hypothermia (cont'd)**

6. **Cut away wet clothing and cover with insulating materials**
7. **Use heat packs if available**
8. **Transport patient in a 10-degree head-down tilt if possible**

**NOTE: THE PATIENT -IS NOT DEAD UNTIL WARM AND DEAD. Don't give up!**