

# LEARNING ABOUT HYPOTHERMIA



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# HYPOTHERMIA

## DESCRIPTION

The effect of cold water around the body is an important part of water safety knowledge. This module looks at the different stages of hypothermia on the body, who is most at risk, how to reduce the effects on the body as well as what steps to take when you recognise the signs that someone is suffering symptoms associated with hypothermia.

## ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES

### Personal Health and Physical Development

**Safety and Risk Management:** Students will identify risk and their causes and describe safe practice to manage these.

### Movement Concepts and Motor Skills

**Science and Technology:** Students will participate in and describe how their body responds to regular and vigorous physical activity in a range of environments. ie Hypothermia.

### Healthy Communities and Environment

**Rights, responsibilities, and law:** Students will research and describe current health and safety guidelines and practices in their school and take action to enhance their effectiveness. (ie water safety rules, how to recognise a rip or hypothermia).

## LEARNING INTENTIONS

### The student is learning

- What hypothermia is, and how to recognise the signs and symptoms
- How to treat hypothermia
- To recognise when someone or themselves are in trouble in, on or around water

## KEY COMPETENCIES

### Participating and Contributing

- Gaining understanding, being actively involved, and contributing within a group

### Managing Self

- Take responsibility for own learning
- Manage time effectively to complete inquiry learning process

### Thinking

- Recognise when someone or themselves are in trouble in, on or around the water
- Know how to recognise hypothermia and how to treat it

### Using language, text and symbols

- Create either a report, poster, powerpoint on how to recognise and treat hypothermia

### Relating to others

- Ask questions and seek help when needed with teacher and peer
- Recognise when someone or themselves are in trouble in, on or around the water

## RESOURCES

- Internet
- Resources to present learning to class ie: poster paper, felts, pens, powerpoint etc (this will vary according to how the student wishes to present their answers)

## ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

- Presentation to the class

## Inquiry Question

What is hypothermia, what are the signs and symptoms and how do we treat it?

**Students write** a list of questions that might help them to answer the inquiry question.

**Students answer** the following questions:

- What do I know about Hypothermia?
- How do I know this?
- What experiences do I have with Hypothermia?
- What do I want to know?
- What ideas am I interested in?
- How can I prevent the onset of Hypothermia?
- How do wetsuits work to prevent the onset of Hypothermia?

## About cold water

Our lakes, seas and rivers are often very cold.

New Zealand water temperatures range from around 8°C – 16°C in winter, to about 14°C – 20°C in summer. This can be a lot colder than air temperature and very much colder than your local council swimming pool which usually feels like being in a bath!

When people are swimming in cold water in the sea, river or lake, it can make them feel tired. And if people accidentally fall into water off a boat, jetty or rocks, not only do they get tired in the water, but they may panic too, so it can make it harder for them to get back to shore safely.

When people are in cold water for even a short period of time, they can start feeling ill. This is called hypothermia.



## Cold Water Survival

- If you are going into cold water, it is really important that you know how to tread water, float, scull and move through the water so you can get back to shore quickly before you start feeling tired.

In Water Skills for Life you learn these water survival skills as well as the HELP position (where in a lifejacket you bring your knees up to your chest and wrap your arms around your knees, to help keep your body warm).

- Learn what it feels like to be in cold water when you're in the shower at home. Turn down the hot water and stand in a cold shower for 2 to 3 minutes. This will get you used to being in cold water.
- Always wear a lifejacket when you are on a boat. If you accidentally fall in the water, you will be able to float and this will help you preserve your energy when you get tired.
- If you are going boating, always wear clothing that will keep you warm and help give you protection like a rash shirt or long sleeve thermals.

## If you fall in cold water, follow the 1-10-1 guide

**1** minute to control your breathing – float, keep calm and don't panic. Try not to breathe fast (hyperventilate)

**10** minutes to self-rescue, plan how you will get out of the water and start moving to land. If you can't self-rescue, stay where you are and wait for help.

**1** hour to make it out of the water and into dry clothes before hypothermia sets in.

If you are wearing a lifejacket: can you make the distance you need to in 45 minutes? Be careful not to overestimate your ability and underestimate the risk. It is risky to leave your boat / position unless there is no likely chance of rescue within an hour and you feel you are close to the shore and/or safety.

If you start to swim, swim with your head out of water at an even and sustainable pace.

When your decision is made, stick to it.

Exit the water as soon as possible.

## If you are not wearing a lifejacket

- If you are not wearing a lifejacket, you will find it difficult to stay afloat after 10 minutes and other important life-saving/survival activities will become difficult
- If you are not wearing a lifejacket, stay with your boat!



## How to identify hypothermia

- Uncontrollable shivering, confusion, blood drained from the face, arms and legs.
- Sleepiness, difficulty speaking, stiff muscles.

## What to do to treat hypothermia

- Remove wet clothing and warm the person by wrapping them in dry clothing and blankets

## Wrap up learning

**Whole class discussion** with teacher about what they now know about hypothermia, the signs, symptoms and how to treat hypothermia.

**Discuss** what they learned, and what they still wish to learn about this topic.

