

AG19 Hypothermia

Objectives:

- To assess and appropriately treat patients who are hypothermic

General Information:

- Mild hypothermia
 - a) Tachycardia
 - b) Lethargy
 - c) Shivering
 - d) Slurred speech
- Moderate hypothermia
 - a) Respiratory depression
 - b) Altered mental status
 - c) Bradycardia
- Severe hypothermia
 - a) Unconscious
 - b) Cyanosis
 - c) Rigid muscles
 - d) Pupils fixed and dilated
 - e) Cardiac arrest
- Management
 - a) Keep patients horizontal at all times
 - b) Count pulse and respirations for 60 seconds
 - c) Use passive rewarming measures only
 - i) Remove wet clothing
 - ii) Cover patient with blanket
 - iii) Turn up heat in unit
- Active rewarming is not advocated in the prehospital setting



Warnings/Alerts:

- Handle hypothermic patients gently to avoid spontaneous conversion into ventricular fibrillation
- Severely hypothermic patients can appear in rigor mortis. Providers should attempt resuscitation on hypothermic patients in cardiac arrest, unless there is clear evidence of irreversible death (ie. Decomposition, decapitation, etc.)

OMD Notes:

-

References:

Mosby's Paramedic Textbook, third edition, 2007 pg 977-979

Performance Indicators:

Time on Scene
Exposure Time

Volume Infused

Patient Disposition

Warming Methods

AG19--Hypothermia

