



**For Immediate Release**

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**THE MPMA WARNS OF  
FROSTBITE DURING THE WINTER MONTHS**

**LANSING, Mich.** – Frostbite is a serious tissue destroying disorder. It is something that is not often anticipated in relatively mild winter temperatures. The Michigan Podiatric Medical Association (MPMA) encourages everyone to stay alert and take precautions to avoid the unnecessary distress of frostbite.

Frostbite can occur in as little as 30 minutes even in temperatures from 30 °F – 40 °F as depicted by the National Weather Service Wind Chill Chart (see below).

“When you're out in the cold, your body works hard to stay warm by altering blood flow toward your heart and lungs,” said Dr. Jodie Sengstock, MPMA Director of Professional Relations. “This leaves your extremities – arms, legs and feet – vulnerable to cold injury, especially toes and fingers.”

Depending on the severity of the exposure, frostbite can affect the skin or underlying tissue. In most cases the area becomes numb and feels frozen. Skin will appear waxy, white or grayish. Any exposure should be evaluated and treated by a physician.

Avoiding frostbite is easier than treating it. If you must go out in the cold, be prepared.

- Dress in light, loose, layered clothing for ventilation and insulation. Water-repellent fabric is a good overlay.
- Make sure that your head, hands and feet are properly covered. Mittens are warmer than gloves, and ski sock liners are a way to keep feet warmer without adding bulk. Liners are worn under regular socks. 100% polyester, or wool fiber, socks will keep feet warmer and drier.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine and nicotine prior to, and while, you are outside. These things leave the skin more prone to thermal injury.
- If you get wet, remove wet clothing as quickly as possible and get to a warm location.
- Check yourself every half-hour or so for signs of frostbite. If your toes, fingers, ears or other body parts feel numb, get inside.

If you believe you have frostbite, there are some things you can do right away. However, medical assistance should still be sought as soon as possible.

- Again, remove wet clothing as quickly as possible and get to a warm location. Do not expose the area to cold again.
- Avoid rubbing the area and warming by dry heat such as a fire, radiator or heating pad. The affected area is numb and is vulnerable to burns.
- Soak the affected area in WARM water for about 30 to 45 minutes. This may cause pain, swelling and the skin's color may change. Keep in the water until the area feels warm and feeling returns.
- Warm up the rest of the body by drinking a warm drink or broth.
- If blisters appear – DO NOT OPEN THEM. Cover with a clean cloth and seek medical attention.
- Do not walk on frostbitten feet. Keeping the foot elevated will also help.

To find a podiatrist near you, visit [www.mpma.org](http://www.mpma.org).

**About the MPMA:**

The Michigan Podiatric Medical Association (MPMA) has been dedicated to serving and protecting the public's podiatric health and maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct among its members for over 100 years. The four main objectives of the organization are: to improve the quality of foot care; to promote the importance of foot health among the general public and health care professionals throughout the state; to increase awareness of the art and science of podiatric medicine and surgery; and to provide continuing medical education to podiatrists. [www.mpma.org](http://www.mpma.org)

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# Wind Chill Chart

