

## Cold intolerance

### Definition

Cold intolerance is an abnormal sensitivity to a cold environment or cold temperatures.

### Considerations

Cold intolerance can be a symptom of a problem with metabolism.

Some people (often very thin women) do not tolerate cold temperatures because they have very little body fat to help keep them warm.

### Causes

Some causes of cold intolerance are:

- Anemia
- Anorexia nervosa
- Blood vessel problems, such as Raynaud phenomenon
- Chronic severe illness
- General poor health
- Underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism)
- Problem with the hypothalamus (a part of the brain that controls many body functions, including body temperature)

### Home Care

Follow the recommended therapy for treating the cause of the problem.

### When to Contact a Medical Professional

Call your health care provider if you have long-term or extreme intolerance to cold.

### What to Expect at Your Office Visit

Your provider will take a medical history and perform a physical examination.

Your provider's questions may include the following topics.

Time pattern:

- Have you always been intolerant of cold?
- Has this developed recently?
- Has it been getting worse?
- Do you often feel cold when other people do not complain of being cold?

- How is your general health?
- What are your height and weight?
- What other symptoms do you have?

Tests that may be performed include:

- Complete blood count (CBC)
- Serum TSH
- Thyroid hormone levels

If your provider diagnoses cold intolerance, you may want to include the diagnosis in your personal medical record.

## Alternative Names

Sensitivity to the cold; Intolerance to cold

---

Review Date: January 13, 2020.

Reviewed By: Laura J. Martin, MD, MPH, ABIM Board Certified in Internal Medicine and Hospice and Palliative Medicine, Atlanta, GA. Also reviewed by David Zieve, MD, MHA, Medical Director, Brenda Conaway, Editorial Director, and the A.D.A.M. Editorial team.



Health Content  
Provider  
Expires 06/01/2022

A.D.A.M., Inc. is accredited by URAC, for Health Content Provider ([www.uran.org](http://www.uran.org)). URAC's [accreditation program](#) is an independent audit to verify that A.D.A.M. follows rigorous standards of quality and accountability. A.D.A.M. is among the first to achieve this important distinction for online health information and services. Learn more about A.D.A.M.'s [editorial policy](#), [editorial process](#) and [privacy policy](#). A.D.A.M. is also a founding member of Hi-Ethics. This site complies with the HONcode standard for trustworthy health information: [verify here](#).

The information provided herein should not be used during any medical emergency or for the diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. A licensed medical professional should be consulted for diagnosis and treatment of any and all medical conditions. Call 911 for all medical emergencies. Links to other sites are provided for information only -- they do not constitute endorsements of those other sites. © 1997-2022 A.D.A.M., Inc. Any duplication or distribution of the information contained herein is strictly prohibited.

