



Temperature Control

The normal range of body temperature for an adult in good health is between 35.0°C and 37.0°C. If you take the temperature in the axilla, then you would expect it to be up to 1.0°C lower than in the mouth. **DO NOT** attempt to take a rectal temperature; you could cause serious damage to your client (unless appropriately trained).

As a result of the SCI, your client's nervous system cannot control changes in his body temperature. This affects how your client's body handles temperature changes in his surroundings; as a result he could easily become overheated or very cold.

A person with SCI will have lost the ability to sweat; this is the body's mechanism for 'cooling down' when the body overheats. Therefore it is important not to 'overheat'.

How to prevent being 'overheated'

- Wear light clothing in warm weather
- Drink more fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Use a spray bottle of cool water, this acts like artificial sweat and will help to 'cool down'.

Because a person with SCI does not feel heat or cold on the affected areas, it is important to protect the skin. Therefore it would be important to consider the weather extremes that could potentially cause sunburn and frostbite.

How to protect the skin

- Wear proper fitting clothing and footwear to protect against sunburn, wind and frostbite.
- Wear a hat and gloves for protection.
- Use sunscreen to prevent sunburn.

Managing a 'pyrexia' (raised temperature)

- Light cotton clothing
- Reduce bedclothes
- Increase ventilation, including use of a fan.
- Increase fluid intake.
- Cold compress to forehead.
- Anti-pyretic medication (prescribed)
- Contact GP if temperature exceeds 40°C or lasts more than 24 hours.

Pulse rate

The normal range of the pulse of a healthy adult at rest is between 55-95 beats per minute, average being around 60-80. If a pulse rate is below 50bpm or is accompanied by other problems then the GP must be informed. The same applies to a heart rate over 100 bpm.

Respiratory Rate

The normal range of respiration for an adult at rest may vary between 12-20 breaths per minute, normally about 16.