

Frostbite can sneak up on winter enthusiasts

By Chuck Myers, McClatchy Tribune

Its typical consequences aren't nearly as severe for Sierra enthusiasts as those of the avalanche or blizzard, but frostbite is an ever-present danger of the snow season.



Frostbite's symptoms may be subtle at first: a slightly painful, prickly or itching sensation; skin that turns red, white, pale or grayish-yellow; numbness; and clumsiness due to joint and muscle stiffness.

The signs of frostbite should not go ignored. Winter campers and backcountry hikers run a particular risk of developing frostbite if they do not take proper protective measures.

Frostbite usually affects smaller or exposed areas of the body, such as fingers and the head. Because of numbness, a person may not realize he or she has frostbite until it's pointed out by someone else.

Frostbite does not occur at once but in several stages.

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