

Too hot? Uqquu?

Even in extreme cold here in the North it can become very hot for a number of reasons. We normally sweat due to the excessive heat created from eating and exercising as our bodies burn energy. You can get hot from walking, physical work, running, or from a number of other reasons.

Some people make a mistake of taking off some of their clothing when they get too hot. If you do this, your sweat could freeze and you could die of hypothermia. People try not to sweat outdoors when ever possible, knowing sweat could kill you. Like everybody else on this earth, people in the North tend to sweat even in the coldest weather. Every year someone dies from hypothermia or from heart attack due to excessive cold.

If you get too hot outdoors, remove your hat or your mittens. Removing other clothing is dangerous as the wet clothing will freeze and you may not be able to put them back on. When you start to feel the coldness without your mittens, you can put them back on before you start to shiver. Removing a hat is also a good idea. Most of your body heat escapes through your head. Hats, mittens, or gloves are easy to put back on, other items are not. Even with the best of precautions, people tend to freeze some of their body parts.

Frozen ears and nose and frost bitten cheeks are common. A person may get wet feet and freeze them in the winter. When this happens we are not to put them in too warm a place because sudden change of temperature is not good for your body. Similarly when heating 'cold' feet, excessive heat is not recommended. Extreme heat will ruin your tissues around your foot and you could lose a foot or both feet. When your feet are frozen, they are to be thawed out slowly (painful) by putting the foot in cold icy water and slowly thawing them out. If thawed out too quickly, you could ruin your foot or even lose it. Common frost bite is treated the same way or very similarly. Place a cold mitten or snow on the area where there is frost bite, and then let it thaw out slowly. If thawed out too quickly, it could be extremely painful. Even thawing out your face with your warm hands is not acceptable. Putting a warm hand over a frozen cheek could ruin the tissues around your face.

If you avoid sweating outdoors, you'll have a great outing without having to worry about damp clothing. Respect your body.

By Elijah Tigullaraq
May 2008