

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a risk in BD because:

- hypothalamic thermoregulation is absent- patients become poikilothermic
- reduced heat production- loss of brain metabolism, resting muscle tone and shivering
- increased heat loss- vasodilatation, exposure, polyuria and cold IV fluids)

Potential adverse effects of hypothermia:

- cardiac dysfunction, arrhythmias, coagulopathy
- leftward shift of the oxyhaemoglobin dissociation curve, with reduced oxygen delivery to tissues.
- delay in determination of death by clinical examination

Hypothermia is easier and better to prevent than treat, by limiting exposure and using surface warming, warm intravenous fluids and warm humidified gases.