

Patient Information : Ice Therapy



Cork Emergency Medicine Physiotherapy Department CUH



www.EMed.ie

Use one of the following treatments as advised by your Doctor or Physiotherapist.

- Apply for 10-20 minutes, 4 times a day. Do not exceed.
- Ice can BURN your skin. Therefore lift the ice or remove your hand or foot regularly during treatment to check your skin.
- Stop the treatment if you experience an uncomfortable burning sensation during cold application.
- Redness of the skin for approximately ½ hour is usual after treatment. If this persists, seek medical advice.
- If you have **Raynaud's Disease** (i.e. your hands change colour from white to blue to red) do not use the following treatments. Consult your Doctor or Physiotherapist.

Ice packs or frozen peas – wrap in a moist towel and apply to the area to be treated. Keep in freezer between treatments. Do not consume peas used for treatment.

Crushed ice wrapped in a moist towel.

Ice cube massage. To treat 1 or 2 small joints e.g. fingers, use an ice cube wrapped in a thin moist cloth and rub around the joint for 5 minutes.

Immersion. Soak hand or foot in cold water for 3-4 minutes with regular removal. Add ice cubes if possible.

Contrast Baths. Use 2 basins – one with warm water, the other with cold water (ice cubes can be added). Place the part into the basin of cold water for 1 minute, then into the warm water for 1 minute. Repeat 3-5 times.

Add Ice cubes Yes No

Refrigerated wet towels.

For first 48 hours after an injury	After 48 hours
Rest and Protect the injured area	Move- start gentle movement of the area
Ice - cool the area.	Ice - continue ice therapy for at least 72 hours
Compression - bandage.	Compression - continue to use a compression bandage for 3-10days.
Elevation - keep the area elevated.	Elevate -continue to keep the area elevated for 72 hours.

Adapted from; Low and Reed, 2000, 'Electrotherapy Explained - Principles and Practice', 3rd Edition, Chap. 9. Prentice, Voight (2001), 'Techniques in Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation, McGraw-Hill Medical, Chap. 3. The use of ice in treatment of acute soft tissue Injury. Beakley et al. The Am J Sports Med 32:251261 (2004) www.nelh.uk/guidelines/SoftTissueInjury

Last updated by Physiotherapy department April 2007

If you are concerned, please contact the Emergency Department you first attended:

Mercy University
Hospital
(021) 4271971

M-UCC at
SMHC (St.
Mary's Health
Campus)
(021) 4926900

CUH
(021) 4920200

Mallow General
Hospital
(022) 21251

Bantry General
Hospital
(027) 52900

