

CONNECTICUT VALLEY HOSPITAL

Physical Therapy Services

PT Equipment Procedure # 21

Re: Cold Packs

Date: March 20, 2000

Revised: October 19, 2008

Description:

Cold packs are canvas-enclosed packs of silica gel. They are cooled in the freezer compartment until they are solid. These packs remain cold for 20-30 minutes. Cold packs decrease body temperature causing blood vessels to close and reduce blood flow. Cold packs can be a stimulant or a depressant depending on the length of use.

Indications:

1. Acute trauma to an area of the body.
2. To prevent pain and swelling from bruises, sprains and strains.
3. Febrile conditions.
4. Headache and dental pain.
5. Arthritic pain.

Contraindications:

1. Loss of sensation.
2. Individuals with high blood pressure or cardiovascular disease.
3. Comatose patients.
4. Individuals who are sensitive to cold such as those with Raynaud's Syndrome or frostbite.
5. Individuals who are unable to express themselves.

Procedure:

1. Wrap each pack in 1-3 layers of towels or pillowcases.
2. Have patient remove clothing from area to be treated and inspect area prior to placing packs on patient.
3. Treatment time is dependent on patient's tolerance to cold. Patient should at first feel a cold sensation. Then there should be a numbing type sensation. When the patient reports a burning cold sensation, packs should be removed.
4. Remove packs and place towels or pillowcases in laundry bag.
5. Clean Cold Packs as per Physical Therapy Cleaning Procedures.
6. Return cold packs to the freezer.