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COLD PACK USE AT HOME

WHAT TO USE

A gel-filled cold pack, crushed ice in a sealable plastic bag, or a bag of frozen peas all work well. Do not apply directly to the skin. Always place a layer of T-shirt thickness cloth between the cold pack and the skin. (Bath towels are too thick to allow adequate cooling.) If you are sensitive to cold, wetting the cloth or paper toweling with very warm water before applying to the cold pack and to the skin may help you accommodate to the cold.

HOW TO APPLY

Find a comfortable place to sit or lie down. Place the cold pack over the area of pain or injury. Secure the pack over the area so that it conforms as much as possible to the curves of the body area. You may want to use an elastic wrap or band or a clothes belt if the area is small; a knee or elbow, for example. Lying on a gel pack sometimes causes leaks, especially on the low back. Instead, sit with the pack between you and the chair or strap the pack to you with your belt, tight jeans, or, in the neck collar/support.

TIMING

For acute pain and inflammation, use the cold pack for 20 minutes every hour you are awake. That is, the pack is on you for 20 minutes and in the freezer 40 minutes each hour. This is the maximum. The minimum effective rate of application is approximately 10 minutes four times daily.

PRECAUTIONS

Do not use cold over an area without sensation or good blood flow. Do not use cold over an area affected by Reynaud's Syndrome, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Gout, or frostbite. Do not use longer than 20 minutes at a time. Do not apply cold packs directly to the skin.