

# Cold Therapy Machines: *Home Instructions*

Your healthcare provider has prescribed a cold therapy machine to help reduce swelling following a surgery or injury. It is important to carefully follow your doctor's instructions for using the machine and protecting yourself from injury.

## What are cold therapy machines?

Cold therapy machines are particularly effective for controlling swelling after an orthopedic surgery, such as joint replacement. The machine comes with a pad that wraps around the joint. Iced water flows through the pad on a constant basis.

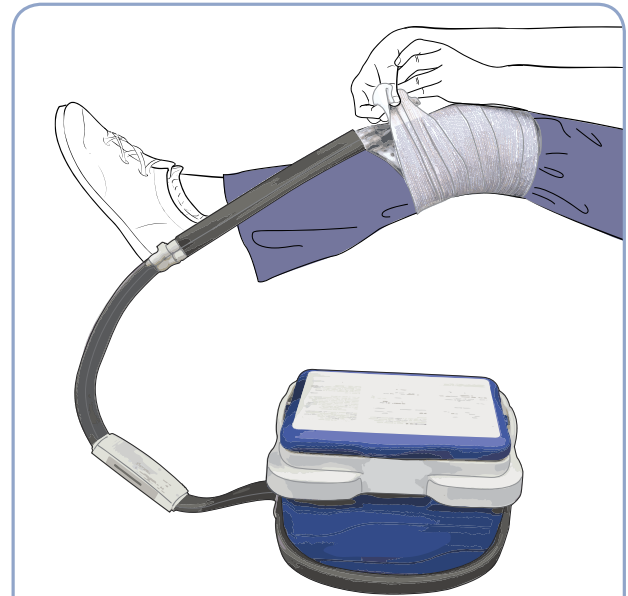
## How do I use a cold therapy machine?

Carefully follow your doctor's instructions for how often to use the unit, how long each therapy session should last, and how to check your skin for signs of injury, such as frostbite and nerve damage. For additional information, refer to the manufacturer's instructions, as different brands of machines may operate differently.

## How can I avoid injury while using the machine?

Avoid injury while using the cold therapy machine by:

- **Avoiding use of the machine for longer than your doctor recommends.** Short, repeated applications (around 10 minutes) may be best, especially at home.
- **Always putting something between the cold therapy pad and your skin.** This could be a towel, loose-fitting clothing, or piece of cloth. **Never apply the cold therapy pad directly on your skin.**
- **Inspecting your skin under the pad every 1 to 2 hours.** Do not use a machine if you cannot easily check under the pad.



Cold therapy machines can control swelling after surgery. Carefully follow your doctor's instructions for effective ways to use your cold therapy machine.

- **Stopping use right away if your skin begins to look or feel different.** This can occur in many ways, including:
  - Increased pain, burning, or swelling
  - Itching, blisters, welts, or increased redness
  - A change in skin color under the pad
 If this occurs, unplug the unit and wait 1 hour before starting it again. If the problem lasts, call your doctor right away.
- **Be aware of your risk of falling.** Your reflexes and movement may be somewhat impaired for up to 30 minutes after ice treatment. Take your time, and get up slowly and safely after using cold therapy.

Use the space on page 2 to record important information about your cold therapy machine and questions for your doctor.

***My cold therapy machine information:***

Brand and model #: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Manufacturer: \_\_\_\_\_

Supplier/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How often to use: \_\_\_\_\_

How long each session: \_\_\_\_\_

How often to check my skin: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_



***When should I call a doctor?***

Contact your doctor if the skin where you use your cold therapy machine:

- Becomes unusually red
- Dramatically changes color
- Develops welts or blisters

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



***Questions for my doctor***

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