

Home Instructions for Applying Cold

There are different ways to apply cold. Try several methods to find one that works best.

Cautions:

1. Never use a cold pack for more than 10 to 20 minutes. Remove when the area is numb.
2. Do not place ice between the part being cooled and a firm surface.
3. Sometimes it is easier to adapt to the ice if a warm, wet cloth is placed around the joint first.
4. Don't use on areas with poor blood flow (e.g. hands or feet) or areas that are numb or tingling.
5. Check the skin thoroughly after treatment.
6. Dry skin thoroughly after treatment.
7. The cold should be applied only to the joint that is painful and swollen. It may be necessary to wrap up in a blanket to keep the rest of the body warm.

Methods	Description	Special Concerns
Ice or cold packs	A purchased gel pack can be kept in the freezer ready for use. An ice bag or doubled plastic bag can be filled with ice. All packs are reusable.	Can be heavy if too much ice is used. Use a cloth or lightweight towel between pack and skin.
Bag of frozen vegetables	A bag (not a box) of frozen peas or corn kernels is lightweight, easily fits around the joint, and is reusable.	Use a cloth or lightweight towel between bag and skin.
Cold Massage	Rub the skin until it feels numb. Use a large ice cube or water frozen in a paper cup (peel paper off top of cup).	Use an insulated rubber glove or other protection for the hand holding the ice. The cold temperature may be too intense for some children.

Slush pack

Line a bowl with 2 heavy plastic bags. Fill bags with 2 parts water and 1 part rubbing alcohol. Fasten tops of bags and freeze until slush forms. It fits easily around the joint and is reusable.

Wrap in a cloth or towels before applying. Keep bags in bowl when not in use to avoid leaking onto food.