

OrthoBethesda Therapy Services

Using Ice at Home

Ice Instructions:

Application of ice over your injured/painful area may help to manage pain and decrease inflammation. Ice should be applied for 15 minutes at a time, followed by at least 45 minutes without ice. It is appropriate to use ice several times per day as needed. If swelling is present, it may be helpful to elevate the injured area above the level of the heart while icing.

Four Stages of Sensation During Ice Use:

1. Cold: when ice is initially applied
2. Burning: after the first few minutes
3. Aching: after about 5 minutes (Redness may appear)
4. Numbness: after about 5 to 7 minutes (Ideal sensation)

Safety:

- Check your skin after 5 minutes to make sure you are not having a reaction
- Discontinue use if you experience any of the following:
 - Increased swelling
 - Increased pain
 - Redness that does not disappear shortly after removal of ice

Options for Icing:

- Crushed Ice (in a bag)
- Bag of Frozen Vegetables (i.e. peas)
 - Do **not** eat afterward!
- Commercial Gel Pack
 - Elasto-Gel All Purpose Therapy Wraps (used at OrthoBethesda)
 - Smaller size = 6" x 16"
 - Larger size = 9" x 24"
 - Chattanooga ColPac, Neck Contour (used at OrthoBethesda)
- Homemade Gel Pack
 - Mix 1 cup of rubbing alcohol and 2 cups of water in a freezer bag. You may also add food coloring to the mixture, but this is optional. Release as much air as possible and seal the bag. Place this bag inside of another bag to prevent leaking. Place in the freezer for 12 hours before using the first time. In addition to using food coloring, it is also a good idea to label the bag with "Ice Pack" and/or "Do Not Eat" in order to avoid accidental consumption.



Where to Purchase:

- The Elasto-Gel All Purpose Therapy Wraps are available for purchase online from multiple distributors, including Amazon.com
 - Both the small- and large-sized packs can be found on amazon by entering "elasto-gel" into the search bar. Similarly, the neck pack can be found by entering "Chattanooga neck contour"
 - The current Amazon.com prices (August 2015) for the Elasto-Gel packs are \$26 for the smaller size and \$35 for the larger size, plus shipping. The price for the Chattanooga Neck Contour ColPac is \$17, plus shipping.