

# Cold Therapy

## Patient Information

Musculoskeletal (MSK) Therapy



The Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website is available on the link:  
<https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets> or scan the QR code.

Author ID: MP / CM  
Leaflet Ref: Phy 048  
Version: 8  
Leaflet title: Cold Therapy  
Last review: February 2026  
Expiry Date: February 2028

**Our Values**People at  
the HeartListen and  
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**This leaflet is to be used following assessment by a Physiotherapist who will determine if this treatment is appropriate and safe for you to use.**

The term cold therapy includes the use of ice packs or cold compresses.

### **Benefits of using cold therapy**

- Cold therapy can help reduce swelling following an injury or after surgery
- It can also help reduce pain

### **Risks of cold therapy**

- Tissue damage due to ice burns
- Alteration in blood pressure
- Infection if skin is broken
- Increase in pain
- Inhibit muscle activity

### **Alternatives to cold therapy**

None that is suitable for home use.

### **Why use cold therapy?**

- To reduce swelling following an injury or surgery
- To help reduce pain

### **When should I not use cold therapy?**

- If you develop any broken skin in the area to be treated
- If it increases your pain
- If you do not fully understand how to apply the treatment
- If you have a circulatory or sensory problem

### **How do I apply the treatment?**

#### **Ice Packs**

- Use a bag of frozen peas or a flexible ice pack wrapped in a damp towel
- Make sure the skin is free from oils or creams
- Apply to the affected area as directed by your Physiotherapist
- Leave in place for 10 to 15 minutes
- Avoid the full weight of the limb on the cold pack as this may increase the likelihood of a burn

## **Cold Compress**

Occasionally your Physiotherapist may advise this as an alternative to ice packs. The same precautions and procedures apply as for the use of ice packs:

- Fill a bucket / bowl with a mixture of water and ice cubes
- Use a small, folded towel or facecloth (depending on the area), submerge it in the ice water mixture and apply to the affected area.

## **Other cold therapy options**

- Cryotherapy cuff / sleeve: follow the manufacturer's instructions for application

## **After application of ice / cold compresses**

If you notice blistering or redness which does not go away, please contact your Physiotherapist for advice. If it is outside normal working hours contact your General Practitioner (GP) or Emergency Department.

## **Contacts**

Physiotherapy Department  
Wrightington Hospital  
Hall Lane  
Appley Bridge  
Wigan  
WN6 9EP

Telephone: 01257 256305

[Wwl-tr.therapyadmin@nhs.net](mailto:Wwl-tr.therapyadmin@nhs.net)

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## Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

## Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager  
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## Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



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## How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request. For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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