

Children's Hospital

Hot - Cold Pack Use UHL Children Hospital Guideline

Staff relevant to:	Clinical staff working within the UHL Children's Hospital.
Team approval date:	January 2024
Version:	V 5
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Written by: Reviewed by:	Sarah Roberts Zoe Syrett
Trust Ref:	C96/2005

1. Introduction & Scope

To provide guidance for nursing staff in the use of hot or cold packs as a form of pain relief therapy for children and young people.

Children and young people using hot/cold packs for pain relief will be cared for appropriately and not exposed to the potential hazard of burns.

This guideline is intended for the use of clinical staff caring for children and young people within the UHL Children's Hospital who would benefit from the use of hot or cold packs as part of their pain relief therapy.

Related Documents:

[Infection Prevention UHL Policy B4/2005](#)

[Consent to Examination or Treatment UHL Policy A16/2002](#)

2. Structure/Resources

A non-pharmacological method to relieve pain, muscle spasm, and joint stiffness.

- Designated Microwave oven
- Fridge/freezer
- Trained children's nurses
- Hot/cold pack

Bags of IV fluid MUST NOT be used

Procedure hot/cold packs	
No.	Action
2.1	<p>Identify the suitability of the child for the use of hot/cold packs</p> <p>Children should have sufficient cognitive ability and communication skills to inform parents and nurses of the temperature of the pack</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents should be informed to regularly ask their child about the temperature of the pack• DO NOT use over wounds, areas of poor circulation or with children with sensory deficits• NOT for use prior to venepuncture
2.2	<p>Heat/Cool the pack as follows:-</p> <p>Cold Follow instructions on the pack</p> <p>Hot Follow instructions on the pack</p> <p>NB microwave ovens vary in strength & heating times will vary to suit personal comfort levels of warmth required</p>
2.3	<p>Once heated/cooled, wrap the Hot/cold pack in a light towel. NEVER USE DIRECTLY ON THE SKIN</p>
2.4	<p>Apply the hot/cold pack to the painful area</p>
2.5	<p>Check the child regularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immediately following application then at 5 minutes and then every 15 minutes• Child should not be left unattended whilst hot/cold pack in use <p>Observe the skin under the hot/cold pack for any signs of redness, if this occurs, discontinue use. If redness present inform medical staff and document in the child's notes. N.B. Children with darker skin- redness may not be as apparent</p>
2.6	<p>Once hot/cold therapy has been discontinued, evaluate and document its</p>

Procedure hot/cold packs	
	effectiveness on the child's pain assessment record and in their medical notes.
2.7	After use, the pack should be wiped clean with Clinell® wipes and left to dry. (Do not use alco-wipes as these remove the printed instructions from the packs). If the pack has been used with a patient with a known infection, it should be discarded.
2.8	Hot/cold packs can be reused for another patient providing the packs remain in good condition and the gel has not been broken into pieces.

4. Education and Training

Guidance and training of use to be provided by the pain specialist Nurses.

Parents written/pictorial information leaflet to be provided.

8. Supporting Documents and Key References

Diamond S, Freitag FG (1986) Cold as an adjunctive therapy for headache. Postgrad Med Vol 79 (1) (305-9).

Suminda K D (2003). Hot gel packs and reduction of delayed-onset muscle soreness 30 minutes after treatment. Journal of Sport Rehabilitation. Vol.12 (3) (221-228).

Swenson C, Sward L, Karlson J (1996) Cryotherapy in Sports Medicine. Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports. 6(4):193-200.

Royal College of Anaesthetists (2012) Good Practice in Post-Operative and Procedural Pain Management 2nd Edition

Royal College of Nursing (2009) Recognition and Assessment of Acute Pain in Children, Update of full guideline, September 2009

Clinical guideline for the diagnosis and management of juvenile idiopathic arthritis (2009) The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

Nottingham Children's Hospital Nursing Guideline W03- Use of Wheatie Bags (2012)

9. Key Words

Cold packs, Hot packs, Children, Young people

The Trust recognises the diversity of the local community it serves. Our aim therefore is to provide a safe environment free from discrimination and treat all individuals fairly with dignity and appropriately according to their needs. As part of its development, this policy and its impact on equality have been reviewed and no detriment was identified.

DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL RECORD FOR THIS DOCUMENT			
Guideline Lead (Name & Title): Zoe Syrett - Pain Specialist Nurse			Executive Lead: Chief Nurse
REVIEW RECORD			
Date	Issue Number	Reviewed By	Description Of Changes (If Any)
2005	1		
April 2016	2		
July 2017	3	Sarah Roberts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification of heating instructions. • Initial and on-going assessment following application guidance updated. • References updated.
December 20	4	Zoe Syrett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added use of designated microwave in-line with infection prevention advice
October 23 – January 2024	5	Zoe Syrett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theraflex brand name removed and replaced with 'hot/cold' pack • Heating and cooling instructions changed to follow instructions on the pack