

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Heat versus ice therapy

Benefits of ice therapy

Applying ice can help to reduce inflammation (heat and swelling) by temporarily reducing blood and lymphatic flow. It can also act as temporary pain relief.

How to use ice

Wrap an ice pack in a damp towel. Apply to the area for 15-20 minutes only. Allow the skin to return to a normal temperature before reapplying. Repeat every two to three hours during the day.

Do

- Use ice on an area of heat, swelling, or redness.
- Cover the ice pack before applying.
- Check the skin for ice burns.

Don't

- Use on broken skin or open wounds.
- Apply the ice directly to the skin.
- Apply for more than 15 minutes at a time.
- Use on an area where you have no sensation.
- Leave ice on while asleep.

Benefits of heat therapy

Applying heat can help to increase circulation (blood flow) and can help muscles to relax. It can also act as temporary pain relief.

How to use heat

Cover a hot water bottle or wheat bag in a dry towel. Apply to the area for 20-30 minutes. Allow the skin to return to a normal temperature before reapplying. Repeat every two to three hours during the day.

Do

- Use heat on an area that is painful, such as a muscle strain or an arthritic joint.
- Cover the heat pack before applying.
- Check the skin for burns.

Don't

- Use on broken skin or open wounds.
- Apply to an area that is already inflamed (hot, swollen, or red).
- Use on an area where you have no sensation.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns, or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet (if relevant) please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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