

What is it?

HCPCS Codes – A9270, E0218, E0236, E1399

Cold therapy is commonly used to treat inflammation due to soft-tissue injury. Rest, ice, compression and elevation (RICE) is a standard recommendation for acute injury. It is also used as part of postoperative rehab after orthopedic surgery. There is limited data published that actually indicates the specific parameters for use of ice. The mode, frequency, and duration of the ice application vary widely across studies.

Cold therapy can be administered using several methods. These include cold immersion, ice massage, application of ice/crushed ice, and use of a gel ice pack, instant ice packs, coolant sprays or cooling devices. Cooling devices may also include compression therapy and be referred to as cold therapy units, cryounits or cryotherapy machines. A variety of continuous cooling devices are commercially available and can be broadly subdivided into those providing passive cold therapy and those providing active cold therapy using a mechanical device.

Passive devices are usually operated by gravity or battery power. In active devices, a motorized pump circulates cold water and may also provide pneumatic compression.

Although cold therapy has a long history as a therapeutic treatment, the literature is conflicting on the efficacy of this treatment. In addition, there is insufficient evidence in peer-reviewed literature to demonstrate that the use of specialized cooling devices has a clinical benefit over the conventional, intermittent application of an ice pack. It does appear that such devices may offer ease of application and be more convenient.

Criteria

■ Cryounits and cryotherapy or cooling / compression devices **are** considered **convenience items** and **not medically necessary**. Devices considered **not medically necessary** include, but are not limited to:

- AirCast CryoCuff™
- ArcticFlow Cold therapy system
- Arctic® Ice Cryotherapy Cold Water Therapy System
- AutoChill® system
- DeRoyal® Cold Therapy Unit
- EBIce® Cold Therapy System
- EBI® Gravity Cold Therapy System
- Game Ready™ Accelerated Recovery System
- Hot/Ice Thermal Blanket
- Iceman Cold Therapy unit
- OPTI-ICE™ Cold Therapy System
- Polar Care Cub, Polar Care 300, Polar Care 300

- Versa-Cool™ Portable Cold Therapy Unit
- VitalWear Cold/Hot Wrap
- VitalWrap System®

Notice

sMed Policies are designed to provide medical guidelines that are applicable for the majority of individuals with a particular disease, illness, or condition. In addition, policies are designed to supplement the medical necessity terms as defined in the member's Policy or Benefit Plan. Therefore, **sMed** policies alone can not override specific Policy or Benefit plan language regarding coverage, limitations and exclusions. In the event of conflict, the Policy or Benefit Plan shall govern. Any **sMed** policies included herein do not constitute medical advice or the practice of medicine. Rather, they are intended only to establish general guidelines. Application of a **sMed** policy to determine medical necessity in an individual instance is not intended, implied or construed to take priority over the professional judgment of a treating provider. In all situations, the treating provider must use professional judgment to provide the care believed to be in the best interest of the patient, and the provider and patient remain responsible for all treatment decisions.

Sentinel retains the right to review and update **sMed** policies at its sole discretion. **sMed** Policies are proprietary information of Sentinel. Any sale, copying or dissemination is prohibited; however, limited copying is permitted for individual use.