

The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Acute Pain Service, Anaesthetic Department, Level 1, Freeman Hospital

Guidelines for using hot/cold packs

Effective from March 2008

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

The PhysioMed TheraFlex hot/cold pack allows you to use the natural therapeutic power of heat and cold in a simple way. It provides a safe, drug free and easily accessible source of soothing heat or cold for patients. Packs are for single patient use only.

INDICATIONS FOR HEAT THERAPY

- Post-operative pain
- Abdominal cramps
- Rheumatism and arthritis
- Muscular stiffness
- Back pain
- Tension headaches

CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS

- Prior to heating a used pack clean with a detergent wipe. **Do not** use alcohol or other solvents to clean the pack.
- After use wash the specified jug with soap and water and dry thoroughly
- The pack may be disposed of in a clinical waste bag

HOW TO USE HOT PACKS

- Hot packs should be heated in the ward kitchen
- Half fill the specified labelled jug with hot water and place the hot pack into the jug, leave for 8-10 minutes.
- Empty the used hot water down the stainless steel sink
- Prior to application on the skin, the pack should be wrapped in a light towel or a pillowcase. Never apply the pack directly to the skin. Apply to the affected area for as long as is comfortable. Generally the pack needs re-warming after approximately 30 minutes use.
- When not in use packs should be stored with patients' belongings.

PACKS SHOULD NOT BE HEATED IN THE MICROWAVE

INDICATIONS FOR COLD THERAPY

- Minor burns and scalds
- Bruises and bumps
- Headaches and migraines
- Nosebleeds
- Toothache
- Insect bites and stings

HOW TO USE COLD PACKS

Place pack in freezer for a minimum of 2 hours. Prior to application on the skin, the pack should be wrapped in a light towel or a pillowcase. Never apply the pack for longer than a 20-minute period. Then leave the injured area uncovered for 20 minutes before reapplying. Cold packs are 'single' use only i.e they cannot be refrozen.

Review date: March 2010