Medical Policy
Cooling Devices Used in the Outpatient Setting

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Policy Number: 510
BCBSA Reference Number: 1.01.26
NCD/LCD: Local Coverage Determination (LCD): Cold Therapy (L33735)

Related Policies
None

Policy
Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS), PPO, and Indemnity

Active and passive cooling devices are NOT MEDICALLY NECESSARY.

Combination active cooling and compression (cryopneumatic) devices are INVESTIGATIONAL.

Medicare HMO BlueSM and Medicare PPO BlueSM Members

Medical necessity criteria and coding guidance for Medicare Advantage members living in Massachusetts can be found through the link below.

Local Coverage Determination (LCD): Cold Therapy (L33735)

For medical necessity criteria and coding guidance for Medicare Advantage members living outside of Massachusetts, please see the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services website for information regarding your specific jurisdiction at https://www.cms.gov.

Prior Authorization Information
Pre-service approval is required for all inpatient services for all products.
See below for situations where prior authorization may be required or may not be required for outpatient services.
Yes indicates that prior authorization is required.
No indicates that prior authorization is not required.
N/A indicates that this service is primarily performed in an inpatient setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outpatient</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Managed Care (HMO and POS)</td>
<td>This is not a covered service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial PPO and Indemnity</td>
<td>This is not a covered service.</td>
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</table>
CPT Codes / HCPCS Codes / ICD Codes
Inclusion or exclusion of a code does not constitute or imply member coverage or provider reimbursement. Please refer to the member’s contract benefits in effect at the time of service to determine coverage or non-coverage as it applies to an individual member.

Providers should report all services using the most up-to-date industry-standard procedure, revenue, and diagnosis codes, including modifiers where applicable.

The following codes are included below for informational purposes only; this is not an all-inclusive list.

CPT Codes
There is no specific CPT code for this service.

HCPCS Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HCPCS codes</th>
<th>Code Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E0218</td>
<td>Water circulating cold pad with pump</td>
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<tr>
<td>E0236</td>
<td>Pump for water circulating pad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ICD-9 Diagnosis Codes
Investigational for all diagnoses.

Description
COLD AND COMPRESSION THERAPY
Use of ice packs and various bandages and wraps following surgery or musculoskeletal and soft tissue injury is common. A variety of manually operated and mechanical continuous cooling devices are commercially available.

The standard postoperative treatment for musculoskeletal surgeries consists of cryotherapy (cold therapy) and various types of compressive wraps. Both ice packs (with or without additives to maintain temperature) and cooling devices can provide cryotherapy. Circulating cooling devices are designed to provide a constant low temperature, which might provide additional benefit compared with the more variable temperature achieved with the intermittent replacement of ice packs. Noncirculating cooling devices might also allow less variable cooling due to the larger volume of ice stored in the insulated tank and the use of circulated ice water.

Noncirculating Cooling Devices
The CryoCuff® and Polar Care Cub devices are examples of passive, noncirculating cooling devices. The CryoCuff device consists of an insulated container filled with iced water that is attached to a compressive cuff. When the CryoCuff container is raised, the water fills and pressurizes the cuff. The amount of pressure is proportional to the height of the container. When body heat warms the water, the cooler is lowered and water drained. The cooler is then raised above the affected limb, and cold water refills the compressive cuff. The Polar Care Cub unit consists of pads held in place with elastic straps, which may also provide compression. The pads are attached to a built-in hand pump that circulates the water through the pads at the same time as increasing the compression around the joint.

Circulating Cooling Devices
In active, circulating cooling devices, a motorized pump circulates chilled water and may also provide pneumatic compression. For example, the AutoChill® device, which may be used with a CryoCuff, consists of a pump that automatically exchanges water from the cuff to the cooler, eliminating the need for manual water recycling. The Hot/Ice Thermal Blanket is another circulating cooling device. It consists of 2 rubber pads connected by a rubber hose to the main cooling unit. Fluid is circulated via the hose.
through the thermal blankets. The temperature of the fluid is controlled by the main unit and can be either hot or cold. The Game ReadyTM Accelerated Recovery System is a circulating cooling device combined with a pneumatic component. The system consists of various soft wraps and a computer-control unit to circulate the water through the wraps and to provide intermittent pneumatic compression. The Hilootherm® Clinic circulates cooled water through preshaped thermoplastic polyurethane facial masks for use after different types of facial surgery. ThermaZone® provides thermal therapy with pads specific to various joints as well as different areas of the head (front, sides, back, eyes). CTMTM 5000 and cTreatmente are computer-controlled devices that provide cooling at a specific (11°C) and continuous temperature.

**Summary**

For individuals who have pain and/or swelling after knee surgery who receive a cooling device, the evidence includes systematic reviews, several RCTs, and a case-control study. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, medication use, and resource utilization. Evidence on manually operated passive noncirculating cooling devices is limited by the control condition used in the trials. Studies that used either a no-icing control or infrequent ice applications do not provide sufficient evidence of comparative efficacy. Other studies have provided no information on the frequency of ice changes, limiting interpretation of the results. Several randomized trials have compared active circulating cooling devices with standard intermittent icing or cold packs, and two of the larger trials found no significant benefit of the continuous cooling devices. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

For individuals who have pain and/or swelling after shoulder surgery who receive a cooling device, the evidence includes an RCT. Relevant outcomes include symptoms, functional outcomes, medication use, and resource utilization. Evidence found that use of compressive cryotherapy produced no significant reduction in pain or medication use compared with the standard ice wrap. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

For individuals who have pain and/or swelling after facial surgery who receive a cooling device, the evidence includes several small RCTs and a pilot study. Relevant outcomes include symptoms, functional outcomes, medication use, and resource utilization. There have been mixed results regarding the intervention’s efficacy in reducing neurologic problems as well as improving eye motility, diplopia, mandible functioning, and mouth opening compared with conventional cooling regimens. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

**Policy History**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<td>11/2017</td>
<td>New references added from BCBSA National medical policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/2016</td>
<td>New references added from BCBSA National medical policy.</td>
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<td>7/2014</td>
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**Information Pertaining to All Blue Cross Blue Shield Medical Policies**

Click on any of the following terms to access the relevant information:

[Medical Policy Terms of Use](#)
References


