**Payment Policy |** Cooling Devices Used in the Home and Outpatient Setting

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 06|19|2012
**POLICY LAST UPDATED:** 12|18|2018

## OVERVIEW
This policy documents the coverage determination for Cooling Devices Used in the Home and Outpatient Setting**.** Cooling devices use chilled water to decrease the local temperature of tissue. There are a variety of cooling devices available, ranging from gravity-fed devices that are manually filled with iced water, to motorized units that both cool and circulate the chilled water. These devices are typically used when ice packs would normally be applied, e.g., after orthopedic surgical procedures.

## MEDICAL CRITERIA
Not applicable

## PRIOR AUTHORIZATION
Not applicable

## POLICY STATEMENT
**BlueCHiP for Medicare**
Cooling devices will be considered not covered as the device is not reasonable and necessary.

**Commercial Products**
Cooling devices, with or without pumping action, are considered convenience items and are not covered and contract exclusions apply.

## COVERAGE
Benefits may vary between groups/contracts. Please refer to the appropriate Benefit Booklet, Evidence of Coverage, or Subscriber Agreement for applicable contract exclusions and limitations of benefits/coverage when services are not medically necessary.

## BACKGROUND
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.

The CryoCuff® and Polar Care Cub devices are examples of passive 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 the water drains out. 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.

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 Ready™ 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 Hilotherm® 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). CTM™ 5000 and cTreatment are computer-controlled devices that provide cooling at a specific (11°C) and continuous temperature.

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.

While there is no national coverage decision for Medicare, cooling devices are addressed in durable medical equipment regional carrier policy. Last reviewed in 2004, the policy reads as follows:

"A device in which ice water is put in a reservoir and then circulated through a pad by means of gravity is not considered DME [durable medical equipment]. Other devices (not all-inclusive) which are also not considered to be DME are: single-use packs which generate cold temperature by a chemical reaction; packs which contain gel or other material which can be repeatedly frozen; simple containers into which ice water can be placed. All of these types of devices must be coded **A9270** if claims are submitted. Code **E0218** describes a device which has an electric pump that circulates cold water through a pad.

## CODING

**BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial Products**

The following HCPCS codes are not covered:

**E0218** Fluid circulating cold pad with pump, any type (Revised text 1/1/2019)
**E0236** Pump for water circulating pad
**A9270** Noncovered device or service

## RELATED POLICIES

None

## PUBLISHED

Provider Update, February 2019
Provider Update, June 2017
Provider Update, August 2016
Provider Update, November 2015
Provider Update, October 2014
Provider Update, July 2013

## REFERENCES


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