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Cold - Hot Treatments

You may have just received an injection (commonly to the knee, shoulder or hip) and these instructions will help to minimize any discomfort. You may also have had a recent injury which will be helped by following these instructions.

Apply an ice pack (or ice in a plastic bag) to the area for about 15 minutes, 3 or 4 times a day. Place a cloth between the skin and the pack so as not to irritate the skin.

Do this for 1-2 days after the injection. Use it for more if the joint feels inflamed. Use it for an injury as long as it provides relief of pain.

After the ice phase, apply a wet heating pad (hydrocollator pack or microwave pack) to the area for about 15 minutes, 3 or 4 times a day.

Ice will calm down inflammation and the wet heat will stimulate blood flow and bring more medication into the area and soften the tissues. It will also "loosen-up" tense joints.

Do not use the wet heat when sleeping and do not use it on inflamed joints or an acute injury. Ice is better for that.

If you recently had surgery, usually ice will be needed for several days (up to 7-10 days). Using ice therapy after surgery will greatly reduce pain.