

Important Information from Dr. Bemenderfer about

# Ice Therapy, Cold Compression Therapy, and DVT Prevention Following Surgery

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## ***What are the Benefits of Ice Therapy, Cold Compression Therapy, and DVT Prevention Therapy?***

The use of postoperative cryotherapy for pain relief and decreasing swell has been shown to be a safe and effective way to help patients recover following surgery with less pain, less discomfort, and decreased need for narcotic pain medicine. Many patients comment on the decreased postoperative pain that ice therapy allows.

In addition, cold compression therapy seems to help with the healing process, decreasing swelling and improving mobility. I feel that it is an excellent option for my patients that are recovering from foot and ankle surgery. I would therefore offer this service to my patients. This aspect of the care is additive and is not mandatory. Some patients may choose to use their own cold packs or ice therapy. These alternatives are likely less effective but can be less costly. I will leave this up to individual patients to choose what is right for them.

Certain patients are at risk for postoperative deep venous thrombosis (DVT) or blood clots in the legs that may result in venothromboembolism (VTE), pulmonary embolus (PE), and even death. Often, they can be prevented with treatment either with medications and/or with the addition of compression devices for the calves. These intervention compression devices have been shown to decrease the incidence of DVT when used in conjunction with aspirin. My patients that are undergoing foot and ankle surgery who are candidates for aspirin therapy should have the addition of an intermittent calf compression device when possible. Other surgical procedures including arthroscopy are at lower risk for DVT or blood clots but would benefit from intermittent calf compression devices to decrease the risk of postoperative complications.

***How Often and for How Long Should I Use Cold Therapies?*** The use of cold compression units for major joint surgery should be used as much as possible the first 2 weeks post-surgery. This should be used when the when awake and alert 1 hour on and 1 hour off alternating time in and out of the cold compression unit. The time out of the machine should be reserved for postoperative exercises and other day-to-day activities.

***How Often and for How Long Should I Use DVT therapy/calf compression device?*** You should use the intermittent calf compression devices as much as possible during the 1st month after major joint surgery. The devices should be on at all times when resting, elevating, sleeping at night, or when you are inactive. If you are very active in walking significant distances or doing postoperative exercises, you may certainly remove them.

Thank you for choosing to have surgery at South Bend Orthopaedics. If there are any questions regarding the use or benefits of these devices, please feel free to reach out to us.

574-247-9441

Or

574-247-5111

*Developed in conjunction with the physicians at South Bend Orthopaedics*

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