

Cryotherapy (Cold Therapy)

About your treatment

This handout explains what cryotherapy is, how it can help, and how to do it during chemotherapy.



Scan with your phone camera for a digital copy of this handout.

What is cryotherapy?

“Cryo” means cold. *Cryotherapy* uses cold to reduce side effects from your chemotherapy treatment. It works by blocking the chemotherapy from getting to certain parts of your body. It does not work for everyone. Your care team will talk with you about whether cryotherapy is right for you.

What side effects does it help with?

- Cryotherapy in your mouth can help:
 - Mouth sores (*mucositis*).
 - Sensitivity in your mouth that makes it difficult to eat or drink cold things.
- Cryotherapy on your hands and feet can help with:
 - Painful nail damage.
 - Numbness, tingling, and burning in your hands and feet (*peripheral neuropathy*).



Cryotherapy can help to reduce chemotherapy side effects.

Who should not do cryotherapy?

You should not use cryotherapy if you:

- Have Raynaud’s disease or any blood vessel problems, especially in your fingers and toes.
- Are allergic or sensitive to cold.
- Have a cold agglutinin disorder (such as CAD or cryoglobulinemia)

Does cryotherapy hurt?

It can be uncomfortable to have extremely cold temperatures in your mouth, hands, or feet. Only use cryotherapy if it feels OK and you can tolerate it. If you have pain while using cryotherapy, stop and tell your nurse.

How does cryotherapy work?

Type of cryotherapy	Supplies	Instructions
Oral (mouth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice chips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask your nurse to bring you ice chips for cryotherapy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put ice in your mouth 5 to 15 minutes before your infusion. • Keep ice in your mouth during your entire infusion.
Hands and Feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frozen gloves and/or frozen socks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If you bring frozen gloves or socks, freeze them at home before coming to your appointment. - Bring a cooler to keep items cold. Your nurse can store your items in a freezer during your appointment. - If you do not have frozen gloves or socks, ask your nurse for an ice pack or a bag of ice. 	<p>Frozen gloves/socks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear gloves/socks 15 minutes before infusion, during infusion, and 15 minutes after infusion. <p>Ice pack or bag of ice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place your hands and/or feet on top of the ice. Do not put your hands or feet directly in ice.

Where can I buy frozen gloves and socks?

You can buy frozen gloves and socks online. Search for “cold gloves and socks for chemo.” You do not need a prescription to buy these.

We suggest that you bring at least 2 pairs of gloves and/or socks to keep the temperature cold during your appointment.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your oncology clinic if you have questions or concerns.

My provider:
