



RANCHO LOS AMIGOS NATIONAL REHABILITATION CENTER
Occupational Therapy and Recreation Therapy Department

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

SUBJECT: PROCEDURE FOR THE APPLICATION OF MOIST HOT PACKS	Policy No.: 613.1 Revised: January 2020 Supersedes: December 2015 Page: 1 of 2
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POLICY:

Procedure and precautions for the clinical application of moist hot packs will be clearly defined.

PROCEDURE:

1. Determine the need for heat application and if patient is appropriate for heat application. Use extreme care when applying hot pack to area where patient may have impaired sensation.
2. Examine and prepare area prior to treatment.
3. Contraindications:
 - impaired sensation
 - acute inflammatory/edema
 - thrombophlebitis
 - malignancy
 - impaired circulation
 - impaired cognition
 - hemorrhage
4. Precautions:
 - a. **DO NOT** place one hot pack on top of another.
 - b. **DO NOT** use toweling that is moist from previous use.
 - c. **DO NOT** use moist hot packs directly over cuts or abrasions.
 - d. **DO NOT** use hot moist packs after balms or liniments have been applied.
 - e. **DO NOT** lay the patient on the moist hot packs. Always place the hot pack on the patient.
 - f. **DO NOT** leave the patient unattended.
5. Before removing hot pack from the hydrocollator, visually check thermometer reading to ensure the water temperature where hot packs have been stored is between 160-165 degrees F.

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6. Prepare hot pack making sure to place at least six (6) to eight layers (8) of toweling between hot pack and patient's skin. Additional toweling may be needed in the presence of impaired circulation or thin skin, and for pediatric or elderly patients.
7. **Always** ask the patient to inform you if the moist hot pack is too hot. Verbally reassess every 3-5 minutes and visually inspect the skin every 5-10 minutes. Use care and special caution if the patient has difficulty communicating, impaired cognition, impaired sensation, or impaired circulation and visually inspect skin every 3-5 minutes.
8. Use caution when treating a patient who has external hardware.
9. Apply hot pack for no longer than 20 minutes.
10. After completing treatment, reassess patient's status and area treated by moist hot pack. Check area for blanching or blistering.
11. Document where and for how long hot pack was applied, and patient's response at end of the treatment.

See Policy No. 613 B for competency check-out for Hot Packs.

Director, Occupational Therapy and Recreation Therapy Department