

This page is for your pre-surgical information. DO NOT return with forms. Thank you.



Ice Compresses

Immediately following surgery, there is an increased leakage of blood vessels. This leads to accumulation of fluid and blood products within the tissues and causes swelling and black and blue marks.

In order to minimize this swelling, it is helpful to decrease the flow of blood to this area. Elevating the head of the bed is one method of decreasing blood flow. Another method is to use cold compresses. When cold is applied, this will shrink blood vessels and the skin will constrict, and the blood flow is reduced, as is the swelling.

We would like you to use cold compresses as much as possible for the next 3-4 days following surgery. After approximately 5 days, the blood vessels return to normal and are no longer "leaky". The cold compresses are not as useful thereafter.

How to Make an Ice Compress

1. Pan of crushed ice and water
2. Wash cloths
3. Two large bath towels

Place a wash cloth into the ice water. Wring it out partially and spread it out flat on a table. Sprinkle a row of ice down the center of the wash cloth and loosely roll up the cloth around the ice. The ice compress should be slightly wet and loosely packed. It is now gently placed over the operated area.

Wrap one bath towel around the head to hold the ice compress in place. The other towel goes around the neck to absorb any water that may drop as the ice melts.

Alternatives include the commercially available eye packs that are frozen in your freezer and thaw on the operated area. You will need to buy two, and one should be chilling while the other is on the surgery site, a bag of frozen peas which conform well to the shape of the eyelids and face can also be used. Frozen peas should not be used in an entire bag, however. Frozen peas should be placed in Glad Wrap in a small amount so that they conform to the site of your incision. They should not be heavy or cause any pain. Ziploc bags may be even better because they are pliable. Alternative, Glad bags sealed with a twisty will also work. Keep two in the freezer while one is being applied.