

Cryotherapy to Prevent Peripheral Neuropathy

What is Peripheral Neuropathy?

Peripheral neuropathy is a potential side effect caused by chemotherapy administration. Peripheral neuropathy presents as numbness and/or tingling of the hands and/or feet. Often described as a feeling of pins and needles, it can worsen over the course of chemotherapy treatment. Peripheral neuropathy can affect quality of life, resulting in dose reduction, or treatment discontinuation. Peripheral neuropathy that develops during chemotherapy can potentially be permanent.

What is cryotherapy?

Cryotherapy is the use of ice or “cold packs” in specific areas to promote hypothermia (lower than normal body temperature). Maintaining a balance of tolerability and lower skin temperature in the hands and feet will decrease blood circulation in these areas and potentially decrease the risk of peripheral neuropathy.

Who should not use Cryotherapy?

- Have Raynaud’s disease or any other disorder of the blood vessels, especially in your fingers and toes
- Are sensitive to cold
- Have cold agglutinin disorders

Supplies Needed:

- Cryotherapy socks and gloves. These can be purchased through many online sites.
OR
- Reusable cold packs with socks and gloves.
OR
- Plastic bags or a basin of ice with socks and gloves. (Towels as needed)

Process during infusion:

1. Start cooling hands and feet 15 minutes prior to start of Taxol/Taxane infusion, using desired method of cooling. If using cold packs or plastic bags, it is recommended to fold over so that both bottom and top of hands/feet are being cooled.
2. Continue using preferred method of cooling throughout the infusion.
3. Continue cooling process for 15 minutes after infusion has ended.

****Remove hands or feet at any time the process causes discomfort and continue use as tolerated.**