

Case Number:	CM13-0054439		
Date Assigned:	12/30/2013	Date of Injury:	03/11/2013
Decision Date:	03/17/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/15/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/31/2013

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to a physician reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The physician reviewer is Board Certified in Occupational Medicine and is licensed to practice in New York and North Carolina. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The physician reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

The claimant is a 33 year old man who was injured March 11, 2013, when he fell on his knee, which he had injured previously. A request was made for 14-day rental of pneumatic compression device and rental purchase cold therapy unit postoperatively for planned arthroscopy and lateral meniscectomy.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

DME Cold Therapy Unit: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Knee, Continuous-Flow Cryotherapy.

Decision rationale: Recommended as an option after surgery, but not for non-surgical treatment. Postoperative use generally may be up to 7 days, including home use. In the postoperative setting, continuous-flow cryotherapy units have been proven to decrease pain, inflammation, swelling, and narcotic usage; however, the effect on more frequently treated acute injuries (eg, muscle strains and contusions) has not been fully evaluated. Continuous-flow cryotherapy units

provide regulated temperatures through use of power to circulate ice water in the cooling packs. (Hubbard, 2004) (Morsi, 2002) (Barber, 2000) The available scientific literature is insufficient to document that the use of continuous-flow cooling systems (versus ice packs) is associated with a benefit beyond convenience and patient compliance (but these may be worthwhile benefits) in the outpatient setting. (BlueCross BlueShield, 2005) This meta-analysis showed that cryotherapy has a statistically significant benefit in postoperative pain control, while no improvement in postoperative range of motion or drainage was found. As the cryotherapy apparatus is fairly inexpensive, easy to use, has a high level of patient satisfaction, and is rarely associated with adverse events, we believe that cryotherapy is justified in the postoperative management of knee surgery. (Raynor, 2005) There is limited information to support active vs passive cryo units. Aetna considers passive hot and cold therapy medically necessary. Mechanical circulating units with pumps have not been proven to be more effective than passive hot and cold therapy. (Aetna, 2006) This study concluded that continuous cold therapy devices, compared to simple icing, resulted in much better nighttime pain control and improved quality of life in the early period following routine knee arthroscopy. (Woolf, 2008) Two additional RCTs provide support for use after total knee arthroplasty (TKA). Cold compression reduced blood loss by 32% and pain medication intake by 24%. (Levy, 1993) It improved ROM and reduced hospital stay by 21%. (Kullenberg, 2006) See also Cold/heat packs. Recent research: This systematic review concluded that solely an analgesic effect was demonstrated by the use of continuous cooling. (Cina-Tschumi, 2007) Another systematic review concluded that, despite some early gains, cryotherapy after TKA yields no apparent lasting benefits, and the current evidence does not support the routine use of cryotherapy after TKA. (Adie, 2010) Although the use of cryotherapy may not be a statistically effective modality, according to this systematic review, it may provide patient benefits. (Markert, 2011) The requested time period is twice as long (14 days) as recommended (7 days) and cannot be approved.