

## Treatment Information

### Simple methods of pain relief for people with Inflammatory Arthritis

Heat and cold treatments may both be used to relieve pain. Both are effective for a relatively short time. They will not make your arthritis better or worse in the long-term but both may help to relieve some of your symptoms.

If you have an acutely painful and swollen joint, which may feel hot, the following treatment may be helpful:

1. Protect your joints by using splints or supports supplied by your practitioner.
2. Maintain your muscle power by isometric exercises – tighten your muscles but keeping joints still.
3. Maintain your range of movement by moving the affected joint as far as possible within the limits of your pain. Do this only once or twice.

#### Pain relief

##### Ice

Use ice for ten to fifteen minutes if the joint is swollen or hot.

1. Wrap ice or a pack of frozen peas in a damp cloth and place on the joint.
2. Wrap a towel around the joint and the ice pack to hold the ice pack in place.
3. Check the condition of your skin every five minutes and remove the ice pack if in any doubt.

##### Heat

If the joint is not particularly swollen but aches then try heat. Use a warm (not hot) hot water bottle **wrapped in a towel** and placed on the affected joint for fifteen to twenty minutes.

Having a warm bath or shower may help to ease general aching joints.

#### Rules for the use of heat and cold treatments

1. Be aware that both can cause burns.
2. If you have poor circulation, or are prone to ulcers, ask before using either heat or cold. **Do not use if you suffer from Raynauds Disease or vasculitis.**
3. Do not use if you have no sensation over the area you want to treat.
4. Do ask for advice if you have heart trouble; it may make a difference to your suitability for the treatments.
5. Heat may make a hot, swollen, inflamed joint feel worse.

## Rheumatology department Patient Information

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### Contact Details

If you have any further questions or need advice about your treatment phone the Rheumatology Advice line on

**01202 442849.**

[www.poole.nhs.uk/our\\_services/rheumatology.asp](http://www.poole.nhs.uk/our_services/rheumatology.asp)

For further health-related information, please contact:

**The Health Information & Resource Centre**

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Rheumatology Practitioners

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**We can supply this information in larger print, on audiotape, or have it translated for you. A member of staff will be happy to discuss this with you. Please call PALS on 01202 448499 or the Health Information Centre on 01202 448003 for further advice**