

Self-made Ice Packs: A Low-cost Adjunct to the Resident Injection Clinic

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According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, procedural statistics report that more than 7,800,000 injections; 4,400,000 neuromodulators; and 3,400,000 soft tissue fillers were performed in 2020 in the United States.¹ A small fraction of these noninvasive procedures were performed in plastic surgery academic programs that have either a chief resident clinic or an injection clinic. Oftentimes, neuromodulators and soft tissue injections can be found at discounted prices in these clinics.

Recent literature shows that a well-organized resident clinic can provide high patient satisfaction scores, low postoperative complication rates, and comparable results as those provided by senior staff.² Under appropriate supervision by senior staff, chief resident clinics can be financially viable and might even bring a positive net revenue to the program. The extra revenue could then be used for the residents' educational fund or the division's overhead.^{3,4}

Therefore, it becomes paramount to maintain low-cost interventions without compromising quality or attention to details. Using local cryotherapy after soft tissue injury has been shown to decrease local tissue inflammation and edema.⁵

Here, we present a low-cost, widely-available adjunct to perform these procedures, utilizing small transparent pill bags and nonlatex hypoallergenic water-based gel, as seen in Figures 1 and 2 (The cost per bottle is \$2 for 8.5 oz/250 ml). We have used the ice packs for the last 18 months in our chief resident clinic without any complications.

Patients are encouraged to apply the bag for 5–10 minutes on the injected surface. They can either discard the bag at the end of the session or take it home and use it for 15 minutes in 4–6 hours. Light activity for 24 hours after facial injections is also recommended.



Fig. 1. Tools to make ice packs. Three different types of ultrasound water-based gel available in most healthcare settings (1 bottle 8.5 oz/250 ml = \$2).



Fig. 2. Self-made ice packs final result. (Below) Ice packs made of 15 grams of water-based gel after being stored in the freezer for 3 hours. Approximately 15 ice packs can be made with one bottle (above) of commercially available facial massager.

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