

The Department of Vermont Health Access Medical Policy

Subject: Paraffin Bath

Last Review: June 15, 2016

Revision 4: June 3, 2015

Revision 3: October 1, 2014

Revision 2: March 20, 2012

Revision 1: April 12, 2011

Original Effective: 2004

Description of Service or Procedure

Paraffin bath is a device that delivers heat to a distal extremity by the use of melted paraffin and mineral oil, for the purpose of treating the extremity by creating a transient tissue temperature rise through heat conduction.

Disclaimer

Coverage is limited to that outlined in Medicaid Rule that pertains to the beneficiary's aid category. Prior Authorization (PA) is only valid if the beneficiary is eligible for the applicable item or service on the date of service.

Medicaid Rule

[7102.2](#) Prior Authorization Determination

[7103](#) Medical Necessity

Medicaid Rules can be found at <http://humanservices.vermont.gov/on-line-rules>

Coverage Position

A paraffin bath may be covered for beneficiaries:

- When the paraffin bath is prescribed by a licensed medical provider, enrolled in the Vermont Medicaid program, operating within their scope of practice as described in their Vermont State Practice Act, who is knowledgeable in the area of rheumatology, orthopedics, and/or rehabilitation medicine including the use of paraffin baths, and who provides medical care to the beneficiary AND
- When the clinical guidelines below are met.



Coverage Guidelines

A paraffin bath may be appropriate for beneficiaries who meet the following guidelines:

- Have a chronic medical condition for which conductive heat is beneficial **AND**
- When the paraffin bath is prescribed by a medical practitioner as described above **AND**
- Has successfully tried the use of paraffin in a hospital or outpatient setting with a professional practitioner skilled in the use of thermal modalities without any adverse reactions **AND**
- Has tried less expensive, medically appropriate treatment, which has proven unsuccessful.

Clinical guidelines for repeat service or procedure

Repeat services are covered when the paraffin bath requires replacement before the DME restriction time frame, for one of the following reasons:

- When the device is no longer functional through normal wear and tear (expected to last at least 5 years).
- A new device will be considered if repair of the current device costs more than 50% of the replacement cost.

Type of service or procedure covered

A paraffin bath, for **non-acute**, chronic, or post-traumatic inflammatory conditions such as arthritis.

Type of service or procedure not covered (this list may not be all inclusive)

Contraindications:

Paraffin baths are contraindicated for individuals who:

- Have open wounds in the treatment area
- Have allergies to paraffin
- Have impaired sensation in the treatment area
- Have cancer, thrombophlebitis, hemorrhage, fever, peripheral vascular disease, cardiac insufficiency, edema, or severe inflammation in the treatment area
- Have tissue damaged by radiation therapy in the treatment area
- Are pregnant, if the treatment area is near the developing fetus
- Have issues related to mental confusion
- Have unreliable thermoregulation, such as the very young or very old.

Coding/Billing Information

The paraffin bath unit and the paraffin are billed separately.

References

- Ayhan, F., Gecene, M., Gunduz, R., Borman, P., & Yorgancioglu, R. (2011). Long-term effects of comprehensive inpatient rehabilitation on function and disease activity in patients with chronic rheumatoid arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis. *Turkish Journal of Rheumatology*, 26(2). Retrieved June 2, 2016, from: <http://www.tjr.org.tr/full-text/403>
- Belanger, A.Y. (2009). Hot pack and paraffin bath therapy. *Therapeutic Electrophysical Agents. Wolters Kluwer Health, Therapeutic May 2009, (chapter 6, pp. 90-107)*. Lippincott, Williams, Wilkins. Retrieved March 11, 2013, from: http://downloads.lww.com/wolterskluwer_vitalstream_com/sample-content/9780781770019_Belanger/samples/Belanger_Ch06_R2.pdf
- Brosseau, L. et al. (2014). A systematic critical appraisal of non-pharmacological management of rheumatoid arthritis with appraisal of guidelines for research and evaluation II. *PLOS ONE*, 9(5). Retrieved June 2, 2016 from: <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0095369>
- Chang, Y.W., Hsieh, Y.S., Chen, H.L., Lee, K.C., & Horng, Y.S. (2014). Comparative effectiveness of ultrasound and paraffin therapy in patients with carpal tunnel syndrome: A randomized controlled trial. *BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders*, 15(399). Retrieved June 2, 2016 from: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2474/15/399>
- Dilek, B., Gozum, M., Sahin, E., Baydar, M., Ergor, G., Ozlem, E. et al. (2013) Efficacy of paraffin bath therapy in hand osteoarthritis: A single-blinded randomized controlled trial. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, 94(4). Retrieved June 2, 2016 from: <http://www.archives-pmr.org/article/S0003-9993%2812%2901126-4/fulltext>
- Dzananovic, D., Kapidzic-Basic, N., Kikanovic, S., & Nozica-Radulovic, T. (2011). Evaluation of the effect of physical therapy for knee osteoarthritis using Womac index. *HealthMED*, 5(3). Retrieved June 2, 2016 from: http://akademikpersonel.kocaeli.edu.tr/ialtun/sci/ialtun12.07.2011_20.20.19sci.pdf#page=179
- Horton, S, Walsh, C. &, Emery, P. (2011). Established rheumatoid arthritis: Rationale for best practice-Physician's perspective of how to realise tight control in clinical practice. *Best Practice and Research Clinical Rheumatology* 25 (2011), 509-521.
- Matanovic, D., Vukasinovic, Z., Zivkovic, Z., Spasovski, D., Bascarevic, Z., & Slavkovic, N. (2011). Physical treatment of foot deformities in childhood. *ACI Vol. LVIII*. Retrieved June 2, 2016, from: <http://www.doiserbia.nb.rs/img/doi/0354-950X/2011/0354-950X1103113M.pdf>
- Rehabilitative measures for treatment of pain and inflammation. (2010-2013). *Merck Manual*. Retrieved June 2, 2016, from: http://www.merckmanuals.com/professional/special_subjects/rehabilitation/rehabilitative_measures_for_treatment_of_pain_and_inflammation.html
- Rashid, S., Salick, K., Kashif, M., Ahmad, A., & Sarwar, K. (2013). To evaluate the efficacy of mobilization techniques in post-traumatic stiff ankle with and without paraffin wax bath. *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences*, 29(6). Retrieved June 2, 2016 from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3905394/>

Sibtain F, Khan A, SHakil-ur-Rehman S. (2013). Efficacy of paraffin wax bath with and without joint mobilization techniques in rehabilitation of Post-Traumatic Stiff Hand. *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences*, 29(2). Retrieved June 2, 2016 from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3809244/>

Siems, W., Bresgen, N., Brenke, R., Siems, R., Kitzing, M., Harting H, et al. (2010). Pain and mobility improvement and MDA plasma levels in degenerative arthritis, low back pain, and rheumatoid arthritis after infrared A-radiation. *Acta Biochimica Polonica*, 57(3). Retrieved June 2, 2016 from: http://www.actabp.pl/pdf/3_2010/313.pdf

Welch, V., Brosseau, L., Casimiro, L., Judd, M., Shea, B., Tugwell, P., & Wells, G.A. Thermotherapy for Treating Rheumatoid Arthritis. In: *The Cochrane Library*, Issue 7, 2010. Chichester: Wiley. Updated Quarterly.

This document has been classified as public information.