

# Using Cold Caps and Cooling Systems for Hair Loss at BC Cancer

## Information for People with Cancer and Families

### What are cold caps and cooling systems?

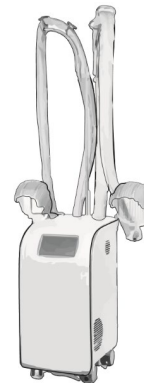
Cold caps and cooling systems try to decrease hair loss (alopecia) in people who are having chemotherapy treatments for cancer. There has been a lot of interest in these two different products over the last few years.

A cold cap is like a tight toque that has ice packs in it. You need to replace the ice packs while you use the cap.

Cooling systems are larger units with the caps attached to a refrigeration machine. The machine circulates cool liquid through the cap. The machine has to be plugged in to power for the entire treatment. We do not allow cooling systems at BC Cancer centres. People using cooling systems need longer appointment times and space. If people use large cooling systems, there are fewer treatment spots available.



*A Cold Cap*



*A Cooling System*

### Can I bring my own cold cap to BC Cancer?

Cold caps are allowed at BC Cancer; however, you need permission and support from the location where you are receiving your treatment. Before bringing in your cold cap, you must speak to your health care team.

There may be safety or operational reasons where we cannot allow you to use your cold cap. We will not always have the space for cold cap equipment. The cold cap or its related equipment cannot affect other people's appointments or their safety.

You must be able to use the cold cap all by yourself. Visitors or a family member can help you with the cold cap. However, they may not be allowed to stay in the treatment room the whole time; they must follow all guidelines regarding storage of the ice packs and visitor rules. You cannot ask staff to assist you.



Provincial Health Services Authority

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## Does BC Cancer provide cold caps?

No. We do not provide cold caps.

We have reviewed the evidence for cold caps and cooling systems to treat hair loss. We looked at the safety of using the cold caps in our treatment areas. There is no strong evidence that cold caps benefit all people with cancer. If new evidence comes out, we will review it. There are many things we consider to maintain the safety of patients and staff.

## Are there any funding options for cold caps?

No. BC Cancer does not have any funding for cold caps.

If you have private health insurance, contact your health insurance provider for more information.

## Where can I find more information about hair loss and cold caps?

At this time, we will not recommend a cold cap company or specific products.

We know hair loss can have a big impact on people with cancer. We have many resources to support people with hair loss:

- Go to [bccancer.bc.ca](http://bccancer.bc.ca) and search “hair loss”
- Ask your health care team or one of our librarians for more information.
  - [Contact a librarian here](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/our-services/services/library/contacts-and-hours)