



spotlight on health

New Studies Show You Can Heat Away Low Back Pain

(NAPSA)—According to two recent clinical studies, patients can turn to continuous, low-level heat therapy for effective relief of acute low back pain. Published in *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, the studies showed that patients treated with heat experienced pain relief that lasted for at least two days after treatment was stopped—a first for back pain remedies.

“We’ve always known that heat makes you feel better, but have never known why or how,” said Deborah J. Steiner, M.D., the principal investigator of the trials and director of clinical research, Research Testing Laboratories, Great Neck, N.Y.

To find out, Dr. Steiner and colleagues evaluated almost 300 patients with acute low back pain in two studies, one conducted during the day and the other during nighttime. Patients were randomly assigned to receive eight hours of continuous, low-level heat therapy (via ThermaCare HeatWraps) per day for three consecutive days, or nights while sleeping, or oral placebo.

“The daytime study demonstrated that heat therapy not only provided significantly greater (68 percent) pain relief than placebo, but also reduced muscle stiffness and improved flexibility, effects which lasted for at least two days after heat wrap use,” Dr. Steiner said. “In addition, the nighttime study showed that patients wearing heatwraps while sleeping reported effective pain relief that lasted throughout the next day.”

Back pain affects an estimated four out of five Americans, making it the leading cause of disability for adults under the age of 45. In most cases, back pain results from



some combination of overuse, strain or injury to the muscles and ligaments that support the spine. While traditional treatments have included increased physical activity and oral non-prescription pain relievers, physicians are increasingly focusing on reducing stress to the spine by using exercise and heat to relax the surrounding back muscles.

“The good news is that the many benefits of heat therapy are easily accessible to physicians and pain sufferers alike with over-the-counter ThermaCare HeatWraps,” added Dr. Steiner.

The air-activated heat wraps are designed to provide at least eight hours of continuous low-level heat therapy, powerful pain relief, and deep muscle relaxation. Once exposed to air, the heat wraps reach a therapeutic temperature of 104° F within 30 minutes, which increases circulation, thereby enhancing the body’s natural restorative process.

To try ThermaCare®, look in the pain reliever aisle of grocery stores, supermarkets, drug stores, club stores or mass merchandisers. For more information on the benefits of heat therapy, visit www.thermacare.com.