

ASSOCIATED MEDICAL, INC.

Provider FAQ

Associated Medical offers specialized DME equipment that treats inflammation and pain non-chemically. We are building a suite of best-in-class products for orthopedic care. Bracing, CPM, wound-management, and related technologies are all available. Our group has built vibrant relationships with many hospitals and orthopedic groups throughout New England.

Physicians and staff, please call or email us for a breakfast or lunch wherein we can demo our products to your team. Demo videos and patient testimonials are available at www.assocmed.com or assocmed.wordpress.com

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WHAT IS THE VASCUTHERM

What is the VascuTherm?

- The VascuTherm is an intermittent pneumatic compression (IPC) device that provides solid-state cold or heat through 20 joint-specific single-patient-use garments/wraps. The machine is custom-designed for orthopedic applications. It's 15 lbs, portable, delivered to the patient's home pre-surgery, and extremely easy to use. The joint-specific wrap enables compression and pain relief at the surgical site and surrounding tissue. The VascuTherm eliminates ice, most management issues, and adds active compression for management of inflammation, edema, and lymphedema. The device also provides calf or plantar foot IPC VTE prophylaxis similar to standard in-hospital devices. The device enables at-home DVT prophylaxis in conjunction with localized inflammation/pain treatment. Patients use the device immediately following surgery and up to 30 days thereafter.

Why is the VascuTherm medically necessary?

- The machine is considered medically necessary by nearly all carriers (we appeal those that deny) as rapid treatment and early prevention of inflammation accelerates recovery and reduces patient risk / comorbidities. Inflammation and edema are natural responses to injury/surgery. Lymphedema is proven to result from surgery and to be correlated with untreated edema. VTE events (DVT, PE) are proven to be correlated with lack of mobilization, and risk increases based on invasiveness and length of convalescence. Reduction in inflammation improves mobilization metrics, and IPC is proven to reduce the incidence rate of DVT. IPC is believed to be safer overall than chemoprophylaxis per internal bleeding risk, current medical literature. Lastly, reduction in inflammation reduces pain, which is further treated by the controlled temperature / cryotherapy. State and federal law has increasingly favored advances in pain management as medically necessary and appropriate. Multimodal therapies are encouraged per CMS.

What are the clinical benefits?

Physicians have reported improvements in overall patient recovery, speed of mobilization, opioid consumption, and inflammation. Physical therapists indicate high satisfaction and gains in flexion, strength, and endurance.

- **Improved outcomes** - Pneumatic compression combined with controlled temperature reduces inflammation, edema and enables earlier mobilization which typically translates to faster return to normal activity and overall outcome enhancements.
- **Better pain management** - Opioids are not the only game in town. A high percentage of surgeons using the VascuTherm have found fantastic results in non-opioid pain management and consumption reduction. There are excellent benefits herein in reducing risks of addiction, diversion, respiratory suppression, chronic pain / RSD, and the onset of obstructive sleep apnea.
- **Inflammation management** - As inflammation restricts motion and causes pain, our primary goal is to reduce swelling and edema non-chemically. Reduction in swelling is directly correlated with speed of recovery.
- **VTE prophylaxis** - IPC is increasingly used in place of chemoprophylaxis as it reduces the risk of internal bleeding / hematoma. Our equipment and service is requested by facilities for both arthroscopy and arthroplasty to prevent DVT and PE in the home or SNF.
- **Multimodal care** - Leading surgeons suggest that the VascuTherm or comparable will be standard of care. Our case history and knowledge of multimodal approaches (and compliments to pharmacologic ones) per AAOS, SCIP, and CMS suggests that this kind of technology provides a win-win for everyone: insurance coverage, faster recovery, risk reduction.

What are the safety benefits?

- **Mechanical over pharmacologic** - The VascuTherm outperforms competitors on patient safety and risk reduction. AAOS, CMS strongly points to combined therapies or those focusing on lower risk treatments. Mechanical pain and inflammation management is inherently lower risk than pharmacologic interventions. Most patients reduce medication-load, including substantial reduction in opioids.

- **Tissue damage** – The VascuTherm is fully programmable for time and temperature. There is an extremely low risk of tissue damage per frostbite due to regulated temp at 43-50F. Automation allows for the patient to wear the device continuously and have programmed start/stop times.
- **Bleeding risk** - For VTE (DVT/PE) prophylaxis, patients reduce the risk of bleeding, hematoma, and infection per mechanical IPC.
- **Compliance** – Patients are more compliant and likely to use the device for pain, edema reduction based on ease-of-use and on/off functionality. VTE compliance is monitored.

What are the financial benefits?

Surgeons and facilities can realize profit both directly per DMEPOS billing and indirectly per increased patient satisfaction and referrals.

- **Revenue** - Surgicenters and surgeons are able to bill per DMEPOS for the disposable wrap placed on the patient in the OR/PACU. Revenue per patient ranges from \$50-150.
- **Time** - Surgeons and staff realize additional time by fielding fewer phone calls from patients for meds, ER/ED visits, and complications. Patients are less likely to be rehospitalized, reinjured.
- **Cost savings** - Insurance pays for this technology as it improves outcomes. Your patients may actually save money based on the coverage and reduction in out-of-pocket cost for low-tech legacy devices. Facilities, hospitals realize cost savings by likely reduction in ER/ED visits, rehospitalization for VTE events, and downstream cost per prolonged convalescence and opioid addiction.
- **Cutting edge care** - Patients love this equipment. Well over 90% of patients report high satisfaction and recommend us. A high percentage of patients are opioid averse; you provide them a strong alternative. Satisfied patients demand less time and generate more referrals.

What is the cost?

- **Patient cost** - Patient cost is often the network copay. We are very sensitive about controlling out-of-pocket cost. Unlike many other technologies, the VascuTherm is covered by 90%+ of insurance carriers. Services available for under- or non-insured patients.
- **Provider cost** - There is no set cost to providers for the VascuTherm. Hospitals and surgicenters rent, purchase, or are provided the equipment. Providers may realize a revenue stream by billing for the patient disposables. The bottom line is better patient care though there is a modest revenue stream for providers that may replace revenue from other products.

Which carriers authorize & how do you handle denials?

- **Authorized by** - Codes for pneumatic compression are authorized by all major medical carriers, who may challenge medical necessity in some cases. We are either in-network or achieve network exceptions for United Healthcare, Aetna, Cigna, Community Health Network / Medicaid / Husky, TRICARE, Diversified, all Workers' Comp payers (ALL), Anthem in some cases.
- **Denials** - We appeal all denials. We are still working on in-network for Anthem and BCBS Federal, which allow out-of-network. We believe that federal and state law will facilitate net/par authorization for Anthem (and other carriers also denying net/par authorization). When we receive a denial and/or lose the appeal, the patient is not expected to be responsible. This policy is essential and is confirmed with each patient.

Can my clinic profit from this technology?

- Yes, via developing a DMEPOS model, we can help your group realize \$50-150/patient in *NET* revenues for the disposable wrap. Your practice bills for the single-patient-use wrap (eg E0655) and receives from \$100-250 in reimbursement depending upon the carrier.
- Please call us to discuss, and we will forward you a presentation. In the shared revenue approach, we supply your practice with the disposable wraps and support your billing staff to

collect revenue and obtain approvals. Our staff handles all delivery, retrieval, sterilization, and tracking of patients and equipment.

Why choose Associated Medical?

- Referring surgeons observe that we demonstrate a high level of care for their patients. We truly enjoy helping patients take fewer meds; with good products we get a lot of positive encouragement. As the president of Associated Medical, I'm optimistic that we will hold an honest, transparent, and altruistic position as we grow. As a company, we're focused on sustainable, quality service and holding a patient-centric approach. Whereas many companies focus on the bottom line, we spend more energy on ensuring patient satisfaction and good support as this has driven our growth. Most providers quickly identify our commitment and true interest in orthopedics and recovery. -Marcus Simpson
- **References available** - About 15 orthopedic facilities in CT regularly prescribe the device. Usage is growing by provider and patient referral per superior outcome metrics. The device is in use across the US by about 100 DME companies and 200 hospitals. Please ask us for a list of references, available in New London, Middlesex, and New Haven Counties.

ORDERING THE VASCUTHERM

How do I order?

- **2 Minutes or less.** Surgeon or PA indicates on surgical booking sheet a request for the VascuTherm. Staff fax over a 1 page script and patient demographic. We handle everything from there. Email marcus@assocmed.com for the script template and full info.
- We contact the patient, introduce the product, and arrange for at-home delivery. We inservice the patient and caregiver in advance of surgery. Our staff confirms with the surgicenter or hospital. Wraps are provided to the surgicenter; therapy can be started onsite. Patients are discharged with the wrap in place; they continue therapy at home. We support the patient through the script, extended if needed. We pickup or provide a UPS airway bill for return of the machine.

Who prescribes the VascuTherm?

The below applies to other products such as the VascuComp, PT7, and general DME.

- **Orthopedic surgeons** - Including specialists in sports injuries, general medicine, joint replacement, spinal, and hand injuries.
- **Physical therapists** - Therapists identify good candidates, refer request to surgeon.
- **Hospital/surgicenter staff/directors** - PACU/ASU often fields request from patients.
- **Internists, gerontologists, gynecologists** - Used in place of LMWH, Warfarin, Lovenox, etc for VTE prophylaxis / pain.
- **Plastic, neurosurgeons** - As above, additional application in edema/lymphedema management.

In orthopedics, which patients benefit most?

- **Sports medicine** - Industry-best for pain management, speed of recovery.
- **Invasive arthroscopies** - ACL, RCR, SLAP as above improvements in compliance, metrics.
- **Arthroscopies** - Per risk factors such as obesity, age, opioid intolerance, overall improvements.
- **Arthroplasties** - At-home / at-rehab pneumatic compression to replace / reduce dosing of VTE chemoprophylaxis. Reduce internal bleeding, complications per current IPC literature.
- **Fractures / General** - compliments pain/anti-inflammatory meds, therapy to speed recovery.

How long do patients use the VascuTherm?

The following are commonly prescribed durations of use, modified per physician script.

- Meniscectomies, Minor Arthroscopies -10 days
- ACL, RCR, SLAP, Complex Arthroscopies - 14-28 days
- Arthroplasties, Total Joint Replacement - 14-28 days
- VTE Prophylaxis - 14-28 days or as prescribed
- Fractures / General - as prescribed

How do you ensure compliance & support the patient?

- Good pre-surgery patient education is key to compliance. We ensure that the patient understands how to use the machine, why it's important, and our availability for support.
- For pain/inflammation management or standard use patients, we communicate multiple times throughout the patient's recovery. If we have a machine failure, we fix it quickly.
- For VTE prophylaxis patients, we communicate regularly to ensure the patient is using the device. We diligently support the rehab/nursing facility and staff to ensure compliance. We track hours of use and report back to the physician if the patient either chooses to non-comply or doesn't express clear understanding of the importance of using the device.
- All patients (and parents/spouses) are given complete in-person instruction as to best-practices and tips/tricks. We deliver support materials, instructions, manual, FAQ, etc as well.
- We sign delivery and training confirmation forms and request surveys for each patient. Feedback forms are regularly shared with your group to confirm compliance and satisfaction.

What's your VTE prophylaxis program?

- Associated Medical is building a VTE compliance program using Bluetooth technology to track patient compliance / including regular phone calls. Tracking data may be faxed to the physician noting times and dates when staff called the patient to confirm compliance to the script. As IPC technologies are increasingly in use for VTE prophylaxis, we are interested in working with physicians and hospital admins on developing at-home compliance monitoring programs.

How do you integrate into the orthopedic workflow?

- **At-home** - Our staff instructs patient/caregiver on use of equipment prior to surgery. Supports patient throughout recovery as needed.
- **Surgicenter** - Equipment in PACU/OR. Patients begin therapy. Wraps onsite, patients discharged with wrap in place.
- **Hospital** - Equipment in PACU/ASU/OR/Floor, wraps onsite. Machines track with inpatients, stay onsite at discharge. Complete support to nurses, admin, staff.
- **Orthopedic clinic** - Wraps onsite for replacement. Staff scripts cases.
- **PT clinic** - Dual-patient PT machines plus wraps onsite for complete integration.
- **Athletic training facility** - Equipment available.

Can I request the VascuTherm in hospital or at my surgicenter?

- Yes, we integrate with both. For same day surgeries equipment allows for immediate cooling and/or pneumatic compression. For overnight shoulders or arthroplasties, it is highly effective to

begin therapy in the PACU and to continue throughout inpatient stay. We provide equipment, training, and all needed support to ensure that optimal care is available.

- Hospitals are generally supportive of trials of this technology. A 30-50 patient trial with full support is generally successful in demonstrating utility. Please contact us for initiation.

What regions do you service?

- **New England** - Associated Medical focuses operations in the Northeast (NJ, NY, CT, RI, MA). We have oncoming partners throughout the country and expect to be able to provide services to patients nationally in the near future.

What's your turn-around time?

- **Same-day** - Called-in cases are in-serviced the same day or next day.
- **General** – Most often practices provide notice / fax the script when booking the surgery.
- **At your command** - We can jump into action within minutes when needed.

Are you in-network or out-of-network?

- As is common in DME, we are out-of-network with some of the major medical carriers due to a variety of reasons, often being that the network is 'closed' by the carrier. We obtain in-network exceptions (GAP or network deficiency) for the majority of patients based on the limited availability of this product. Per ERISA/PPACA federal laws, the carrier must authorize access to care. Patients are informed that they will not be charged if we fail to obtain insurance coverage.
- We achieve in-network approvals on a regular basis with all major medical carriers, TRICARE, Medicaid/CHN/Husky, and all workers' compensation carriers/adjusters.

Can you provide a demo?

- **Breakfast or lunch?** We would be glad to introduce our products at your facility; email marie@assocmed.com or sales@assocmed.com to arrange.