

Wheat filled heat packs

STAYING SAFE IN YOUR HOME



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Wheat filled heat packs can provide excellent relief for aches, pains, and stress. If not used safely, they can overheat and cause burns or start a fire.

Risks of using a wheat filled heat pack

Wheat filled heat packs, also known as wheat bags or heat packs, are fabric bags filled with wheat or a type of grain and designed to be heated in a microwave. If not used correctly, the grain can become very hot and catch fire.

The risk of fire increases when the pack:

- is heated for longer than recommended
- is reheated before it has completely cooled
- is used to warm a bed
- filling becomes very dry from constant use.

Over time, continual heating reduces the natural moisture in the wheat. As the wheat filling dries out, it is more likely to overheat, potentially causing burns or starting a fire. Heat packs have been known to catch fire during heating or while being used to warm bedding.



Wheat filled heat pack safety tips:

- Only buy wheat packs that come with clear heating instructions.
- Always carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.
- Never overheat wheat packs.
- Don't use wheat packs in confined spaces that can trap heat, such as under blankets or on bedding.
- Leave wheat packs to cool in a safe area and on a hard surface that won't catch fire, such as a kitchen sink.
- Don't reheat a wheat pack until it has completely cooled.
- As soon as your wheat pack starts to smell burned or charred, or if you notice this smell when heating it, let it cool down and then dispose of it.
- Check the life of the wheat pack according to manufacturer's instructions.

Purchasing a safe wheat filled heat pack

It is recommended to purchase from a reputable supplier. Only buy wheat packs that come with clear heating and safety instructions. Always check the recommended lifespan of the pack.

Using a wheat filled heat pack

Before heating

- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.
- Check the pack for damage, loose stitching, charring or burnt smells.
- Ensure the pack is clean and completely dry.
- Don't use the pack if it has been previously overheated.

Heating safely

- Place the wheat pack flat in the centre of the microwave.
- Follow the recommended heating time.
- Double check the microwave timer is correct. Accidentally setting 30 minutes instead of 3 minutes has caused serious fires.
- Never leave the microwave unattended while heating.
- Watch for signs of overheating such as an overcooked burning smell, smoke or charring. If this occurs, turn off the microwave and allow the pack to cool completely before disposing it.

Safe use

- Don't apply directly to the skin - wrap it in a cloth or apply it over clothing.
- Don't use wheat packs to warm beds.
- Don't let anyone, particularly children or elderly fall asleep with a wheat pack.
- Use extreme caution with elderly or frail people as their skin is more sensitive to heat.
- Don't use on babies or young children.

After use and storage

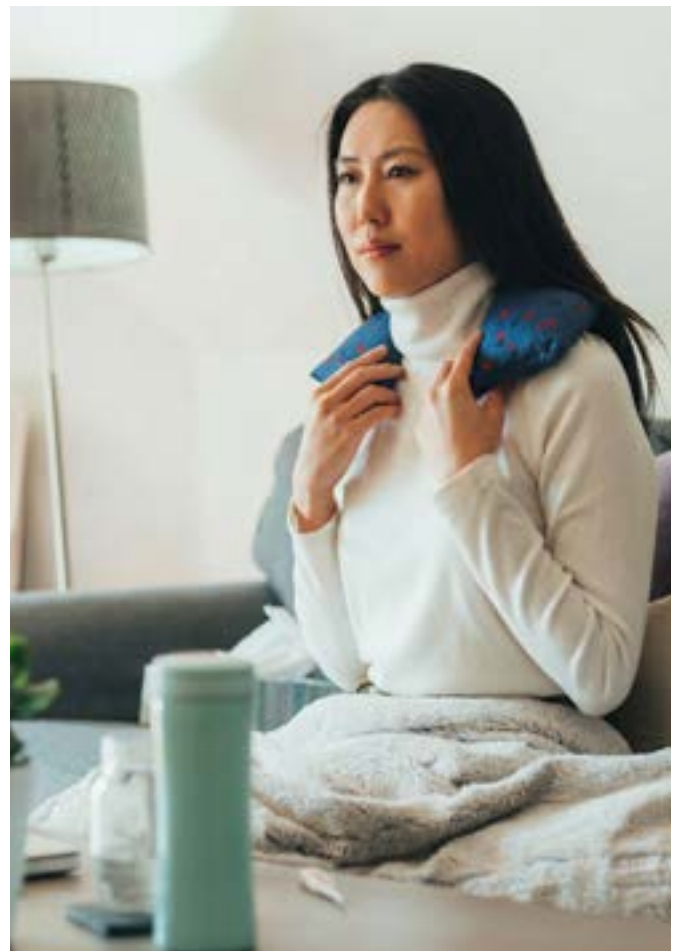
- Allow the wheat pack to cool completely before storing.
- Leave it to cool on a hard surface that won't catch fire, such as a kitchen sink.
- Don't place on soft furnishings like beds and couches while cooling.

If a fire starts

If a wheat filled heat pack begins to smoulder or catches fire and can't be put out safely - get out, stay out and call **Triple Zero (000)** immediately.

Designing and making wheat filled heat packs

When making wheat filled heat pack you should follow the guidance in Australian Standard AS/NZS 5116:2016 (Microwaveable Heat Packs – Wheat and Other Organic Filling Materials). Safety information and heating instructions should always be included with your products. It is preferred to use natural, flame retardant materials, never use rubber or plastic backed materials. Also avoid using wheat which contains dust.



For more information on home fire safety visit www.cfa.vic.gov.au/homefire