
THE FINANCING OF BALNEOTHERAPY IN HUNGARY BY THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE FUND

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Therapeutic services in Hungary provided for medical rehabilitation are financed by Social Security, in accordance with a Ministry of Health decree (5/2004. (XI.19), within the frame of which the following services may be claimed for [1] :

- thermal water pool (including the thermal water of the Lake Hévíz as well),
- thermal tub bath,
- mud pack therapy,
- underwater traction,
- CO₂ bath,
- medical massage,
- underwater water-jet massage,
- underwater group exercise,
- complex thermal bath treatment.

The duration of the various therapeutic services covered by the National Health Insurance Fund is as follows :

	Therapeutic services	Average time
1	thermal water pool	30 minutes
2	thermal tub bath	20 minutes
3	mud pack therapy	20 minutes
4	underwater traction	15 minutes
5	CO ₂ bath	15 minutes
6	medical massage	20 minutes
7	underwater water-jet massage	15 minutes
8	underwater group exercise	25 minutes
9	complex thermal bath treatment	4 hours

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Financed treatments

They can be prescribed for the rehabilitation of chronic rheumatology, orthopaedic, traumatic, neurological diseases and peripheral vascular diseases - which are deemed to cause documentable and significant functional failure, in spite of continuous medical treatment and nursing. Additionally, they can be prescribed following orthopaedic surgeries, residual symptoms of slipped disc interventions, st. post-lesions of extremities, st. post-spinal lesions, rheumatoid arthritis, other arthritis, sero-negative spondylarthritis, osteoarthritis, chronic low back pain, other neurological diseases, peripheral vascular diseases, infantile defect of extremities, haemophilic arthropathy, infantile cerebral paresis and muscle atrophy, serious defect of one extremity, juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, arthrogryposis, Larsen syndrome, birth defect of the spinal cord, scoliosis and other multiple joint dislocations, congenital symptoms with joint contracts and defect of posture.

A separate decree (23/2007. (V.18.) regulates therapeutic services that may be reserved with the support of National Insurance Fund [2]. In Hungary, they are as follows :

I. Thermal baths of national quality (baths whose reputation and visitor numbers, together with their appeal, is beyond a local and regional level) [3]. **The General Directorate of National Health Resorts and Thermal Baths** allows waters deemed thermal to be known as recognised thermal spas. The Directorate is constantly carrying out on the spot surveys of technical conditions, equipment and the quality of the services, as well as the turnover of patients, and the thermal baths are categorized on this basis (national, regional or local level). It is worth mentioning a few internationally renowned thermal baths, such as the Gellért Baths, the Széchenyi Bath and Spa Thermal Pool Complex, the Lukács Spa and Swimming Pool, and the Rudas Thermal Baths.

Treatment type	Basic value of public support (without VAT, in Euro)*	National Insurance Fund support (%)	National Insurance Fund amount (without VAT, in Euro)
01 thermal water pool (including the thermal water of the Lake Hévíz as well)	2.0	50	1.0
02 thermal tub bath	2.3	85	2.0
03 mud pack therapy	4.5	FIXED	3.5
04 underwater traction	2.7	FIXED	2.0
05 CO ₂ bath	3.8	FIXED	2.9
06 medical massage	3.4	FIXED	2.1
07 underwater water-jet massage	3.7	FIXED	2.8
08 underwater group exercise	2.6	85	2.2
09 complex thermal bath treatment	9.6	85	8.2

* Based on a currency rate of 257.83 HUF/ EUR and VAT : value added tax

II. Regional Thermal Baths (The thermal baths that are known, recognised and visited in the whole given region)

Treatment type	Basic value of public support (without VAT, in Euro)*	National Insurance Fund support (%)	National Insurance Fund amount (without VAT, in Euro)
01 thermal water pool (including the thermal water of the Lake Hévíz as well)	1.7	50	0.88
02 thermal tub bath	2.1	85	1.8
03 mud pack therapy	4.1	85	3.5
04 underwater traction	2.4	85	2.1
05 CO ₂ bath	3.4	85	2.9
06 medical massage	3.0	70	2.1
07 underwater water-jet massage	3.3	85	2.8
08 underwater group exercise	2.3	85	2.0
09 complex thermal bath treatment	8.5	85	7.2

III. Local Thermal Baths (Thermal baths that are mostly visited by the local population of the surrounding regions)

Treatment type	Basic value of public support (without VAT, in Euro)*	National Insurance Fund support (%)	National Insurance Fund amount (without VAT, in Euro)
01 thermal water pool (including the thermal water of the Lake Hévíz as well)	1.6	50	0.8
02 thermal tub bath	1.9	85	1.6
03 mud pack therapy	3.6	85	3.1
04 underwater traction	2.1	85	1.8
05 CO ₂ bath	3.4	85	2.9
06 medical massage	2.7	70	1.9
07 underwater water-jet massage (tangentor)	3.0	85	2.5
08 underwater group exercise	2.0	85	1.7
09 complex thermal bath treatment	7.7	85	6.6

Thermal treatment supported by National Insurance may be ordered with a bar-coded medical prescription, written out by a doctor in accordance with a separate decree. In the case of foreign patients under public decree, who originate from a country with which

Hungary has an international cooperation agreement, the country code and the patient's social insurance/identification code should be stated. Separate thermal treatments may be claimed for at the same service provider. One should start to use the prescribed treatments within 30 days of requesting them. If a patient has to stop treatments due to justifiable changes in their health condition, and the treatment cannot be continued, any remaining treatments can be ordered again. The treatments may be ordered two times in one calendar year, without consideration of the type of illness. The courses within one treatment may also be combined. Within the thermal treatment courses, four different treatments may be prescribed for 15 occasions, and in the case of casualty or post-operative cases, up to 20 occasions. There may be 15, 30, 45, or 60 and up to 80 treatments altogether.

Thermal treatments financed by Social Security may only be claimed for from service-providers who have a valid cooperation agreement. The National Health Insurance Fund (OEP) publishes a list of service providers contracted with OEP to provide thermal treatment services, which also shows those who have ceased to have this entitlement. It is published on a quarterly basis in the Official Journal of the Ministry of Health.

References

1. 5/2004. (XI.19.) Ministry of Health decree
2. 23/2007. (V.18.) Ministry of Health decree
3. National Tourism Development Strategy. January 2005.