

General information for administering compresses

Compress materials

Cloth sizes that are used for all large body parts that have proven themselves:

- **Inner cloth = substance cloth** (smooth cotton, double layered) width approx. 28 cm
- **Middle cloth** (rough cotton, double layered, or terry cloth) width approx. 32 cm
- **Outer cloth** (wool or molleton fabric, or terry cloth towel) width approx. 36 cm
- A **length** of 140 cm is the same for all cloths.

Children's compresses have a length of one and a half times their upper body circumference.

The **width** is measured from the waist to the armpit.

For **oil compresses** and **poultices** you can use old cotton cloths (old handkerchiefs, tea towels, sheets torn to size).

Preparing the patient, room and materials

Patient

- At least half an hour after the last meal
- Empty the bladder before the treatment
- The feet must be warm! If necessary, warm them up with a hot water bottle or foot bath (otherwise there is a danger that the warmth coming from the compress will rise towards the head and the feet will become even colder).
- Remove all confining clothing parts, including watches, jewelry, etc.

Room Good ventilation, pleasantly warm, no draughts; no background noise; no direct incidence of light on the patient's eyes, this also applies to the post-treatment rest (see below).

Materials Everything that is needed for the application must be prepared beforehand and placed on the bed ready to use: knee roll, small pillow for the neck, compress utensils.

Hot-water bottle: filled (not bulging) with hot water, vented (= place the hot-water bottle flat on the table, hold the filler neck upright so that all the air can escape).

Positioning the patient and applying the compress

If possible, have the patient lie on their back. If necessary, elevate their upper body and support their arms. Lay out the outer and middle cloths on the bed at the height of the corresponding part of the body, have the patient lie on them, mold the cloths one after the other over the substance cloth.

Place the knee roll or similar, cover the patient, including their shoulders. Avoid constriction in the neck area. If the person feels constricted in the heart area and/or breathless, leave their hands uncovered.

Place a small pillow under their neck so that they do not have to hold their head themselves. Remove the hot-water bottle from their feet! Cover their feet, even from the sides, without putting pressure on their toes. Do not pull the blanket under their heels.

Temperature Hot moist compresses: fan the body part with the hot cloth, then apply as hot as possible. Fevers from approx. 39°C: Choose a compress solution 2°C cooler than the body temperature; this has a cooling effect.

Preparing tea Pour 1 liter boiling water over 1 tablespoon of dried leaves, let steep for 3–5 minutes and strain into a thermos flask.

Essential oils 1 teaspoon in a cup of water or 1 tablespoon in approx. ½ liter of water

Post-treatment rest Every compress needs a rest afterwards. This is an essential part of the application and starts with the removal of the compress materials. As a rule, it is 30 minutes.

Follow-up After removing the cloths, rinse the inner cloth in clear water and hang them all up to dry. They can be reused several times. Poultice packs are only used once.

Instructions: Lemon applications in cases of fever

Lemon is a suitable treatment in case of fever – e.g., with restlessness, dizziness, headaches and circulatory weakness – due to its versatile external applications:

- Lemon slices on the soles of the feet
- Whole-body washing
- Circular chest compresses
- Wrist compresses
- Calf compresses
- Heart and forehead compresses

Particularities:

- Ensure warm feet, e.g., by giving a foot bath in bed

1 Lemon slices on the soles of the feet

Materials

- 2 slices of lemon for each foot (organic)
- Socks or gauze bandages to fix them in place

Applying the lemon

- Put 1 slice of lemon each in the arch of the foot and 1 slice each under the ball of the foot
- Fix the lemon slices in place with gauze bandages or put on socks, then press down the slices a little.
- Duration: approx. 1 hour, if the patient sleeps, also longer

2 Whole-body washing

Materials

- Bowl
- Mug/glass
- Fork
- Fruit knife - ½ lemon
- Water, about 2°C below the patient's body temperature

Applying the lemon

Preparing the lemon solution:

- Hold the half lemon with the fork in the water and cut into the skin all around; press with the bottom of the glass.
- Only partially uncover the patient, wash and immediately dress and cover them again: work from the head to the feet, include the back to down over the buttocks.
- Have the patient rest afterwards, dressed and loosely covered.

3 Circular chest compress

Materials

- Substance cloth
- Middle cloth
- Outer cloth
- ½ lemon
- Hot water (60–80°C)

- Bowl
- Mug
- Knife and fork

Applying the chest compress

- Prepare the patient (see the “General instructions” under “Guidelines”)
- Place the outer and middle cloths at thorax level on the bed so that the upper edge of the cloths is at armpit height without cutting in
- Pour the hot water into the bowl
- Hold the half lemon with the fork in the water and cut into the skin
- Press out the fluid with the bottom of the mug
- Roll up the substance cloth from both sides and dip it into the water
- Have the patient sit up and free their upper body
- Wring out the inner cloth and unroll it from the middle of the patient’s back to both sides
- Have the patient lie back on the prepared towels
- Unroll the substance cloth over the chest from both sides.
- First mold on the middle cloth, making sure that the edges are sealed.
- Do the same with the outer cloth
- Duration: approx. ½ hour

Follow-up

- Remove all the cloths, wash out the substance cloth and hang everything up to dry

4 Wrist compresses

Particularities:

- Only in case of chills

Materials

- 2 substance cloths: torn cloths, approx. 10 cm wide, 25 cm long, folded into 4 layers
- Roll up 2 guest hand towels, folded lengthwise, from one side
- ½ lemon
- Hot water (60–80°C)
- Bowl
- Mug
- Knife and fork
- 2 pieces of sticking plaster
- 2 hot-water bottles
- An additional cover, if needed

Applying the wrist compresses

- Place the 2 hot-water bottles in the bed
- Prepare the lemon solution:
- Pour the hot water into the bowl
- Hold the half lemon with the fork in the water and cut into the skin
- Press out the fluid with the bottom of the mug

- Dip a substance cloth into the bowl, wring it out and wrap it around the patient's wrist as hot as possible
- Wrap the guest hand towel closely around it and fix it in place with the sticking plaster
- Do the same with the other wrist
- If needed, cover with the second cover
- Duration: approx. 15 minutes

Follow-up

- Wash out the substance cloth and dry all the cloths

5 Calf compresses

Particularities

- Alternatively, a circular lemon chest compress is just as suitable, especially for children

Materials

- ½ lemon
- Water, 2°C under the patient's body temperature
- Bowl
- Mug
- Knife and fork
- Substance cloth
- Middle cloth
- Outer cloth

Applying the compress (the patient must have warm feet)

- Place all three cloths next to the bed (rolled up from one side)
- Lemon solution: pour the hot water into the bowl
- Hold the half lemon with the fork in the water and cut into the skin
- Press out the fluid with the bottom of the mug
- Dip a substance cloth into the bowl and wring it out
- Wrap it on closely, from the metatarsophalangeal joints up to below the knee (leave no air pockets)
- Do the same with the middle and outer cloths
- Then do the same with the other leg
- When the cloths are warm, remove them, wash them out, dip them back into the lemon solution and put them on again
- After about 30 minutes in total (2–3 times applied), take a longer break, depending on the condition of the patient

Follow-up

- Wash out the substance cloth hot, then dry all the cloths; the solution can remain standing for several hours.

6 Heart and forehead compresses

Peculiarities

- A few drops of Arnica Essence (Weleda) can be added to the lemon solution, especially when treating elderly people

Materials

- A substance cloth large enough to cover the application area, folded to 4 layers
- Guest hand towel

Applying the heart and forehead compresses

Prepare the lemon solution:

- Pour the water (approx. 1–2 °C less than the patient's body temperature) into the bowl
- Hold the half lemon with the fork in the water and cut into the skin
- Press out the fluid with the bottom of the mug
- Dip a substance cloth into the bowl and wring it out, place it on the patient and cover with the guest hand towel

Follow-up

- Wash out the substance cloth and re-use