

General instructions for applying compresses

Compress materials

Cloth sizes that have stood the test of time and can be used for all large parts of the body:

- **Inner cloth** (smooth cotton, folded double) ca. 28 cm wide
- **Intermediate cloth** (rough cotton, folded double, or terrycloth) ca. 32 cm wide
- **Outer cloth** (wool, flannelette or terrycloth bath towel) ca. 36 cm wide

A **length** of 140 cm is the same for all cloths.

The length for **child compresses** is one and a half times the upper body torso.

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

Old cotton cloths can be used for **oil compresses** and **poultices** (old handkerchiefs, dish towels, bed sheets torn to size).

After the treatment rinse the inner cloth in clear water and let the others dry. They can be reused repeatedly. Poultices are only used once.

Preparing the patient, the material and the room

Patient

- At least half an hour after the latest meal
- Empty the bladder before the treatment
- The feet must be warm, use a hot water bottle or foot bath if necessary (otherwise there is a danger that the warmth from the compress will rise to the head while the feet become even colder)
- Remove all restrictive clothing, watches, jewellery, etc.

Room Well ventilated, pleasantly warm, no draft, no background noise, no light shining directly into the eyes.

Materials Place everything that will be needed ready close by on the bed: a knee roll, a small cushion for the neck, compress utensils.

Hot water bottle: filled (not bulging) with hot water and emptied of air (= lay the hot water bottle on a table, holding the neck upright, so that all the air can escape).

Position Lying on the back if possible. Spread out the outer and intermediate cloths on the bed at the level of the body part to be treated. The patient lies down on them, the cloths are moulded up around the inner cloth one at a time.

Add a knee roll or whatever is needed and cover the patient, including the shoulders. Avoid constriction of the neck area. If the heart area feels constricted and/or the patient has difficulty breathing, leave the hands uncovered.

Place a small pillow under the neck. Now remove the hot water bottle from the feet if applicable. Cover the feet, also on the sides, but without pressure on the toes. Do not pull the blanket under the feet.

Temperature Moist-hot compresses: fan the body part with the hot cloth, then place it on the skin as hot as possible.

With fever of ca. 39°C or higher: select a compress solution 2°C cooler than the body temperature – it has a cooling effect.

Instruction for: Ginger kidney compress

Particularities

- The kidneys are each about the size of the palm of your hand and are situated in the area of the lower ribs on either side of the spine. The positioning of the kidney compress is not to be confused with an application to the LS area (lumbar spine).
- The desired warming effect of the ginger compress may be delayed, beginning only after several applications
- The feet must be warm before the compress is applied, otherwise the warmth of the compress goes to the head
- In the first phase of the application there may be increased sensitivity to external disturbances – this calls for special protection against noise, light, smells, etc.
- Towards the end of the application the patient may want to resume being active. The duration of the post-treatment rest should then be adapted to the individual person (shortened)
- In rare cases there may be itching or a reddening of the skin. Then less ginger can be used to prepare the next application

Materials

- Inner cloth, intermediate cloth, outer cloth
- 2 level tablespoons of dry ginger powder
- A basin
- About 300 ml of hot water (ca. 60°C)

Applying the compress

- Place the outer and intermediate cloths ready in the kidney area on the bed and warm them up with hot water bottles
- Fold the inner cloth to the size of the kidney area (to cover both kidneys)
- Put ginger powder in the basin, pour hot water over it and stir
- Dip the inner cloth into the basin, wring it out thoroughly and place it on the kidney region
- Lay the intermediate and outer cloths quickly and closely over the area
- Remove all of the cloths after about 30 minutes
- Post-treatment rest for a maximum of 30 minutes

Follow-up

- Rinse out the inner cloth, which can be reused