

## 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:                   Ginger thorax-back compress

### Particularities

- The patient can experience the warmth development as wave-like: first a feeling of warmth appears, then it cools down, then it rises again. This also explains the recommendation to leave the application on for 40 minutes to allow maximum warmth generation
- After several applications, the skin may become dry and itching may occur. It is then recommended to treat the skin with slightly oily ointments or lotions – but with a time delay, not immediately after the application

### Materials

- 1 teaspoon ginger powder in a bowl
- Pour ca. 300 ml hot water (60°C hot) into a thermos flask
- 2 safety pins
- Outer cloth
- Intermediate cloth (slightly larger than the substance cloth) so that the moisture of the substance cloth does not get into the outer cloth
- Inner cloth, ca. 20 x 15 cm, folded into 4–6 layers
- Hot-water bottle
- Gloves, if necessary, in order to be able to grasp the hot substance cloth

### How it is done:

- Place the intermediate cloth in the middle of the outer cloth, and a hot-water bottle filled with hot water on top of it
- Roll up the outer cloth from both sides and place the rolls on the hot-water bottle so that a small package is formed and the cloths are preheated
- Take all of the Materials to the patient
- Have the patient sit up in bed
- Pull up the patient's clothing in back as much as possible
- Place the pack in the appropriate position (thorax height, with upper edge of the outer cloth at the level of the armpit) Open the pack, unroll the rolls a little, place the hot-water bottle on a shelf
- Pour boiling water into the basin with the ginger powder
- Immerse the substance cloth in the water and make sure that the powder is evenly distributed on the cloth
- Wring out the substance cloth (use gloves if you find the cloth to be too hot) and lay it on the intermediate cloth on the bed
- Take both cloths together and gently apply them to the patient's thoracic back
- Hold the cloths in place with both hands and have the patient lie down
- Place the outer cloth under the armpits on both sides of the chest one after the other and fix it in place with the safety pins
- Pull down the clothing over it

- Cover well with the duvet, adjust the height of the head end as needed. After 40 minutes remove the substance and intermediate cloths: have the patient turn on his side (away from you). Pull up the clothing slightly and grasp the substance and intermediate cloths under the outer cloth and take them out. Have the patient turn back on his back. Tighten the loose cloths and cover the patient again
- After another 30 minutes, remove all other compress cloths

### **Follow-up**

- Thoroughly wash out the inner cloth with hot water and hang up all of the cloths to dry