

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: Fenugreek joint compress

Particularities

- Fenugreek seed powder swells up to approx. 2.5 times its volume when mixed
- Since it must be mixed hot, it clumps immediately
- This requires quick mixing – spreading – applying
- The material takes on the shape of the body, quickly becomes firm and then holds that shape
- **Caution:** The paste sticks strongly and blocks the drains of washbasins, it must therefore not get into them when cleaning the utensils

Materials

- Medium-sized basin
- Wooden board for transporting the poultice
- Hot water, which is poured in
- Seed powder:
 - 3–4 heaped tablespoons for knee and shoulder wrapped compresses
 - 5–6 heaped tablespoons for a hip joint wrapped compress
- Fork
- Inner cloth: a torn cloth, double the size of the joint to be treated, with additional edge allowances to fold over the seed paste
- Intermediate cloth, rolled up
- Outer cloth (wool), rolled up

Instructions

- Prepare patient and room: see general instructions
- To make the paste: pour the powder into the basin
- Add running hot water, approx. 75°C, while stirring quickly with the fork
- The finished paste must be quite liquid, because it will swell up a lot
- Spread the paste on one half of the torn cloth, about 0.5–1 cm thick
- Cover with the other half of the torn cloth and fold the excess edges back

1. Instructions for the knee:

- Mold the poultice quickly around the joint. Leave the hollow of the knee free
- Wrap the intermediate cloth around it
- Wrap the outer cloth around both (do not leave any air pockets)
- Put something soft under the knee
- Cover and settle the patient
- Duration: 45 minutes
- Then remove all of the cloths
- Post-treatment rest: 30 minutes

2. Instructions for the shoulder:

- Roll up the dry cloths
- Mold the poultice over the joint, leaving the armpit free
- Intermediate cloth: wind once around the upper arm to help hold it in place
- Then wrap around the joint, also under the armpit, if necessary fix in place with adhesive
- Wrap on the outer cloth in the same way
- Duration: 45 minutes
- Then remove all of the cloths
- Post-treatment rest: 30 minutes

3. Instructions for the hip:

- Lay the outer and intermediate cloths onto the bed at the level of the hips
- The patient lies down
- Mold the poultice around the greater trochanter (joint head)
- Snugly wrap on the intermediate and outer cloths
- Duration: 45 minutes
- Then remove all of the cloths
- Post-treatment rest: 30 minutes

Follow-up for all applications

- Dispose of the poultice (put the whole package in the organic waste or compost)