

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: Quark compress

Particularities

- A quark compress that is too cool causes reactive overwarming when placed on a local inflammation. That is why quark must never be applied directly from the refrigerator. It should be lukewarm.
- Remove the liquid whey using a sieve before the application
- Arnica essential oil, for example, can be drizzled onto the prepared pack (as explained below) if needed

Materials

- Quark = only pure low-fat quark, organic if possible
- A waterproof underlay to protect the bed from liquid whey (it is very wet)
- A wooden board or tablet and dough scraper or large knife to spread out the quark
- Hot water bottles (not boiling water, otherwise the protein curdles) to warm up the quark to body temperature, e.g., for moist bronchitis
- An inner cloth of the appropriate size
- An intermediate cloth and outer cloth (thick flannelette cloth or a bath towel for a chest compress)

Applying the compress

- Spread the inner cloth out on the board/tablet
- Spread the quark about 1 cm thick on the inner cloth, with an area corresponding to the area to be treated, then fold the cloth in from all sides
- If needed, an essential oil or other medication can be drizzled onto the side of the pack that will touch the skin and spread lightly
- Lay the single-layer cloth side of the quark pack on the area to be treated and cover it with the intermediate and outer cloths

Duration of the treatment:

- Cool applications (such as for mastitis, distortion, acute arthritis): remove the compress when the quark feels unpleasantly warm
- Pre-warmed applications (such as for moist bronchitis): the compress can be left on for hours until the quark dries out and starts to crumble. Warmth accumulates from this point onward, leading to the opposite of the desired result.
During the application the patient must remain well covered in bed.
- Then rinse the skin with lukewarm water and dry it

Follow-up

- Rinse the cloths, dispose of the quark