

## 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: Borage calf compress**

### **Particularities**

- Apply only to the calf or else to the entire leg, including the groin, depending on the indication
- Always include the feet in the compress

### **Materials**

- Moisture protection for the bed
- 2 inner cloths for a calf compress, 2-3 inner cloths for an entire leg up to the hip, always include the foot
- Intermediate and outside cloths depending on the area of application
- Basin with 300 ml water (cool, ca. 25°C for inflamed/hot limbs), (ca. 40°C for cool extremities with poor circulation)
- 6 ml borage essential oil 20%

### **Applying the compress**

- Possibly work as a pair
- Protect the bed from moisture, place the outer cloth ready in the leg area
- Mix the water with 6 ml borage essential oil
- Roll up the inner cloth, dip it into the mixture and thoroughly wring it out
- Wrap the inner cloth around the leg, beginning at the foot (leaving the toes free), and continuing upward
- Do the same with the intermediate cloth
- Cover the wet pack with the outer cloth
- If the patient feels cold, or if too much warmth accumulates due to the compress, stop the treatment
- Normally the treatment lasts 30 minutes, followed by 30 minutes of post-treatment rest