

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.

Instructions for: Eucalyptus oil bladder compresses

Particularities

- Caution during pregnancy, breastfeeding and with infants (consult a doctor)

Materials

- Eucalyptus oil 10%
- Inner cloth (folded 4 times to the size of the area to be treated)
- Warm padding: if possible use raw wool or a wool cloth of the appropriate size (ca. 1 to 2 cm larger than the inner cloth)
- Outer cloth
- 1 hot water bottle
- A plastic bag (food-safe, such as a freezer bag) for warming up and holding the inner cloth

Instructions

- Drizzle ca. 30 drops of oil on the inner cloth, fold one more time and place in the plastic bag (add a few more drops before each subsequent treatment, depending on the aroma)
- Fill the hot water bottle with warm water, place the bag with the oil-imbued cloth on top of it (to warm up the cloth)
- Place the warm padding around the hot water bottle (also wrapping the outer cloth around the hot water bottle for bedridden patients)
- Let everything warm up for at least 5 minutes
- Remove the inner cloth from the plastic bag, unfold it and place it with the oily side directly on the skin over the bladder region. Place the warm padding on top and wrap the outer cloth around the abdomen.
- Variation: for outpatients the oil cloth with the warm padding can be placed directly in the knickers over the bladder region)
- The patient's feet must be warm **before** the treatment starts (otherwise place the hot water bottle on them)
- Duration of the treatment: at least 30 minutes, followed by 30 minutes of post-treatment rest

Follow-up

- The oil cloth can be stored in the plastic bag after the application. It can be reused over a long period.