

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: Melissa oil abdominal compress

Particularities

In general, no hot-water bottle is used on oil compresses, although it can be done when specially requested/indicated. However, this is not generally done, so that the warm quality of the oil is not masked by the artificial heat source and the patient can generate his own warmth.

A folded piece of wool fleece is used as an intermediate cloth.

The inner cloth (substance cloth) can be made of burette silk.

Materials

- Wala Melissa oil
- 1 hot water bottle
- External cloth
- Intermediate cloth: long piece of wool fleece, folded double, in the corresponding size
- Inner cloth made of cotton fabric (= torn from old underwear), double folded in the size of the area to be treated (approx. 1–2 cm smaller than the wool fleece)
- Freezer bag (food safe) to warm and store the inner cloth, it can be used for 2–3 weeks

Preparation:

- Sprinkle the inner cloth well with the appropriate oil and place 1x folded into the freezer bag (sprinkle evenly for the first applications, adding only a few drops before each further application).
- Fill the hot-water bottle with hot water at approx. 50°C
- Place the freezer bag with the substance cloth on the hot-water bottle.
- Wrap the wool fleece around the hot-water bottle and freezer bag
- Allow to warm for at least 5 minutes

Applying the compress

- Have the patient sit up in bed, place the outer cloth in the bed so that it will lie under the back of the patient where it is needed:
- Have the patient lie down
- Unfold the inner cloth and place it together with the warming fleece on the patient's abdomen
- Wrap the outer cloth as tightly as possible around the patient's abdomen. Work quickly so that the oil cloth does not cool down.
- Duration: 1 hour or longer, if the patient feels comfortable (e.g., overnight)

Follow-up

- Remove the inner cloth and wool fleece, if necessary leave the outer cloth as it is
- Place the inner cloth 1x folded into the plastic bag (reuse several times)
- The wool fleece can also be used several times