

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:

Arnica cap

Particularities

It is important to treat strokes as soon as possible after the stroke, as well as to apply an arnica cap intensively during the first week, as the body's regenerative capacity is the highest during this period.

In acute care it can be practical and save time to simplify the application, whereas for treatment lasting several hours or days other aspects come to the fore.

How it is done: Arnica cap in acute care

Materials

- Weleda arnica essential oil (planta tota mother tincture, it is important for it to contain the flowers, leaves **and** roots)
- Warm water
- A spray bottle or the like
- Terrycloth towel or cap

Additionally, as an alternative:

- Cotton cloth
- Small basin for the arnica solution

Instructions

- Dissolve arnica essential oil at a ratio of 1:10 in warm water, pour it into a spray bottle, spray the head (hair area) with ca. 5–10 puffs. Cover the head with the terrycloth towel or cap, let it work for ca. 30 min
- Alternatively, soak the cotton cloth in the arnica solution (see above), wring it out and place it on the entire hair area, including the forehead, and cover with a terrycloth towel or cap
- Another, simplified way of applying arnica, is to apply a forehead or neck compress several times a day for 30 minutes. This is suitable for headaches in connection with high fevers and infections, as well as for traumatic events

How it is done: Arnica cap in long-term care

Materials

- Weleda arnica essential oil (planta tota mother tincture, it is important for it to contain the flowers, leaves **and** roots)
- 2 torn cloths ca. 60 x 60 cm
- A small bowl
- Medical strips
- A thin wool cap

Instructions

- ca. 250 ml of warm water (ca. 40°C) in a basin with 2 tsp arnica essential oil
- Fold one cloth into a triangle, fold the long side ca. 4 cm, lay it on the forehead (from the eyebrows upwards), the patient holds the cloth in place with his/her hands
- Lay a cloth around the entire head
- Place the ends of the cloth one on top of the other beneath the back of the head at the start of the neck and fix them in place with a medical strip
- Do the same with the second, dry cloth
- Pull a wool cap over it
- Settle the patient
- Leave the compress on for 30 minutes to 1 hour, then remove everything. In severe cases this compress can be left on for up to 24 hours (it is very effective!), the inner cloth is dipped into the solution again every 3-4 hours
- Put the wool cap back on because of the moist hair and to envelop the area
- Post-treatment rest 30 minutes

Follow-up

- Rinse out the inner cloth and hang up all of the cloths to dry