

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: Ginger shoulder-neck compress

Materials

- 1 hot-water bottle
- Outer cloth: circular wool cloth, ca. 140 x 30–36 cm
- Bath towel
- Intermediate cloth: hand towel (to protect against moisture), folded in half
- Inner cloth: a firm cotton cloth to fit the neck, folded to 6 layers of ca. 25 x 15 cm
- Gauze or man's handkerchief
- Ginger root, ca. 40 g
- Grater
- 2 safety pins

Instructions

- Grate ginger root onto the substance cloth
- Place the gauze/handkerchief on top and fold in from all sides to form a closed pack
- Place the pack on the hot water bottle and warm up for approx. 5–8 min. so that the coolness escapes from the moist ginger (do not heat!)
- Go to the patient with all the Materials
- Have the patient sit up
- Place the circular cloth on the bed so that it will lie under the armpits
- Place the bath towel in the neck/shoulder region, with the upper edge at approx. half-head height
- Place the intermediate cloth as moisture protection at shoulder height on the bath towel
- Place the ginger packet on the intermediate cloth at the level of the neck region
- Clear the patient's neck area
- Have the patient lie back, correct his position if necessary
- Pull the bath towel forwards/down over the shoulder area
- From the sides, mold the circular cloth to the front over the chest and fix it place with the safety pins
- Cover well with the duvet
- Pull the pillow deep into the neck (relaxed position and to preserve warmth)
- Duration: 30 min., adapt individually

Post-treatment rest:

- Remove the ginger pack so that the bath towel in the back area is opened as little as possible and the warmth is retained: open the circular towel and the bath towel, remove the ginger pack and the intermediate towel
- Carefully put the other two cloths back on, cover, and let rest for another 20–30 minutes