

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: Yarrow Lung Compress

Particularities

With this compress there is the following difficulty to handle: We want to address the lung and bronchial area (not the upper abdominal organs). However, the cloths must be passed under the armpits without getting stuck. The patient's respiration must also be allowed to flow freely. Nevertheless, the compress should fit snugly. Experience has shown that it tends to be placed too low.

The temperature of the compress depends on the body temperature of the patient:

- For temperatures above 39.5°C (103.1°F) the compress temperature should be about 2°C (3.6°F) lower than the patient's body temperature.
- If the patient's body temperature is below 38.8°C (101.8°F), we make the compress as hot as the patient can tolerate. In this case it is advisable to preheat the dry cloths, otherwise the compress will cool down too quickly.

In the border area between these temperature values, we discuss with the patient whether he or she wants the compress to be hot or cool. A reference point is also the state of health and consciousness of the patient.

Materials

- Yarrow (flowers and leaves), 1 tablespoon
- A pot for brewing the compress solution
- ½ liter boiling water
- 1 small basin
- 1 sieve
- Outer cloth
- Intermediate cloth
- Inner cloth
- 2 flat-filled hot-water bottles (if no high fever is present)

Preparation

- Wrap the outer and intermediate cloths around hot-water bottles and place in the bed
- Prepare the patient (see "General **Instructions**"), who then lies down on the bed.
- Brew the tea for the compress solution and strain into the basin
- LOOSLY roll up the inner cloth from both sides and lay it in the basin
- Lay out the outer and intermediate cloths horizontally and centrally on the bed at thorax height, the patient then lies on his back. Positioning aid: the patient lays both arms stretched out to the left and right, then align the dry cloths midway up the armpits

To apply the compress

- Have the patient sit up again, wring out the inner cloth, place it on his back and roll it around to the sides of his upper body.
- The patient lies back, arms stretched upwards, continue rolling the moist compress over his chest, one end over the other, and immediately cover with the intermediate cloth.
- Now correct the position of the intermediate cloth: ONLY tighten the edges to avoid evaporative cooling at the edges. There may be loose wrinkles the middle of the compress, so the breasts of female patients are not squeezed.
- Next, lay the outer cloth over it and do the same. The damp cloth must be completely covered by the intermediate cloth. The intermediate cloth is completely covered by the outer cloth.

- The patient puts his arms back next to his upper body. If the compress is now too tight, it can be stretched as follows: grasp the compress cloths from below under the armpits and pull them apart with a short strong jerk.
- Place hot-water bottles under the thorax area from both sides
- Duration: 30 minutes
- Then remove all the cloths
- 30 minutes of post-treatment rest

Follow-up

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

Evidence

Well-proven in many patients

Dosage

1 x daily

Onset of effect

Immediate

Length of therapy

Daily use for a few days or longer, as needed

Other recommended therapies

The use of yarrow in the lung compress can be replaced or supplemented by any other indicated substance, e.g., horsetail, butterbur, lemon (especially when there is fever), horseradish.

To administer a yarrow lung compress with the addition of lemon, cut the lemon into the finished yarrow solution and press out. This variation is helpful as a fever-reducing measure for children whenever they have a high fever, instead of calf compresses. If the child falls asleep under the compress, you can leave the compress on until the child wakes up. As an exception it may also be allowed to dry out on the body.