

FOMENTATIONS and Other Simple Remedies

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There are certain standbys of simple remedies that every person who uses simple remedies for the treatment of common ailments should know. The fomentation is the standard treatment used by all people who apply the simple remedies. A fomentation means simply the application of a compress such as a folded towel which has been squeezed from hot water, or made hot by steaming. The simplest possible use of a fomentation is merely folding a towel to make a square, dipping it in hot water, squeezing it nearly dry and laying it on the chest for a cough or on the abdomen for indigestion. Change the compress every two minutes to keep it hot. The effectiveness of the heat can be greatly increased by simply making every fourth compress a brief (45 seconds) cold compress made by squeezing a bath towel from ice water. Continue the alternation of heat and cold for 10-30 minutes. When the patient begins sweating, put a cold cloth to the forehead and sponge the face every minute or two.

I prefer using the steaming method; however, as it is easier; it does require some rudimentary, but generally available equipment. A large canner which can be purchased from a hardware store is the main item required. Fold the canning rack together and turn it upside down. Put approximately two inches of water in the bottom of the canner, but it should not come up high enough that when the water is boiled it will splash up on the fomentation cloths.

The fomentation cloths may be prepared from thick laundry flannel folded over to three thicknesses, making a pad approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch in thickness, or, in a pinch, a towel may be folded. A piece of thick wool flannel may also be folded three times with a large Turkish towel folded into the center and fixed together with a quilting stitch so that the towel will not slip: this will make a very functional fomentation pad. Four pads will be needed. Sprinkle the pads with water to dampen the fabric about as one would dampen clothes for ironing. Fold the fomentation pads fairly loosely and stand on end in the canner on top of the rack. Place the lid on the canner and bring to a boil for about twenty minutes before removing the first fomentation pad. A fomentation cover can be made of a piece of synthetic blanket about 30 X 36 inches wide. Remove the hot, sprinkled, and steamed fomentation pad, open it out on the fomentation cover and quickly fold the fomentation cover over to make a nice pad. This fomentation can be placed on the abdomen, chest, around a thigh, across the back, or used in any way to bring heat to an area. It can be placed over the sinus area to treat sinusitis, or it can be wrapped around the feet of a person who needs a hot foot bath but cannot sit up.

Use the fomentations for pneumonia, bronchitis, coughs, arthritis, colitis, peptic ulcer, systemic diseases such as lupus, infectious mononucleosis, or influenza. It should not be used in tuberculosis or heart attacks. The fomentation is usually used in the following way: apply the fomentation pack to the skin after placing a layer or two of towels to protect the skin from overheating. Cover the entire pack with another towel and then spread a sheet or blanket over the person, depending on room temperature. After about five minutes, change the pack by removing all of the materials, towels, etc., and placing a cold towel on the chest, having first frictioned the skin with the cold towel. After thirty seconds of cold, replace the pack with a fresh hot one that has been wrapped as previously described and the skin protected with a towel as before. Repeat this process for three changes or more if needed, ending with the cold. Dry the area. If the patient is not sweating, he can be simply covered and left for 30 minutes in his bed to "react." If he is sweating he should be given either a brief warm shower or a cold mitten friction. The cold mitten friction is a brisk friction rubbing of the skin with a washcloth wrung from tap or ice water, beginning with one arm, proceeding to the next, both legs, the back, chest, and abdomen.

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During the treatment when the patient begins to warm up, place a folded cold washcloth on the forehead, and refresh with cold every one to three minutes. Do not forget this part, as it prevents a sense of languor or dizziness after the fomentation. A hot foot bath or a heating pad wrapped around the feet is a good way to increase the sweating reaction. Keep the person completely covered by a sheet or blanket if there is any draft or sensation of chilling. Since the person may sweat copiously give water by straw during the treatment, or just before and afterward.

BOILING WATER METHOD with towels

- a. Fold large bath towels lengthwise and twist as much as possible. Place middle $\frac{3}{4}$'s into boiling water and let it thoroughly soak.
- b. Lift out of water and pull ends hard away from each other to wring out. Untwist by dropping one end.
- c. Lay wet towel over dry towel, wrap, place on 1-4 thicknesses of towel on patient.

STEAM METHOD with fomentations or towels

- a. Soak in water and wring out 5 towels or fomentations.
- b. Place rolled up towels or fomentations on grid in large canner.
- c. Boil for 20 minutes (NOT touching water).
- d. Lay hot towel or fomentation on dry blanket or towel, wrap, and place on 1-4 thicknesses of towel on patient.

MICROWAVE METHOD with towels or fomentations

- a. Soak large towel in water and wring out well.
- b. Place in plastic bag.
- c. Microwave on high 4 minutes.
- d. Lay hot towel or fomentation on dry blanket or towel, wrap, and place on 1-4 thicknesses of towel on patient.

OVEN METHOD with towels or fomentations

- a. Soak towels in water and wring out well.
- b. Bake in oven at 350°F 20 minutes.
- c. Lay hot towels or fomentation on dry blanket or towel, wrap, and place on 1-4 thicknesses of towel on patient.

HYDROCLATOR PADS METHOD

- a. Boil 20 minutes.
- b. Wrap towel, place on 1-4 thicknesses of towel on patient.
- c. Freeze when not in use.

THERMOPHORE METHOD

- a. Use purchased electrical moist heating pad as directed.

For more information contact:

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Useful in all types of pain to stimulate circulation, to decrease inflammation particularly in joints and muscles, to bring sedation, to treat local or systemic infections such as pneumonia, pyelonephritis, bronchitis, influenza, colds, abscesses, or diseases of the digestive tract.

Materials:

- 4 Fomentation packs 12" x 32" (4 thicknesses of toweling—best material 50% wool, 50% cotton)
- 4 Fomentation covers (36" x 36" – blanket material)
- Towels, washcloth in cool water to sponge face, large basin of hot water for foot bath, plastic sheet to protect bed, canning kettle to heat packs

Procedure:

- Set of 3-4 fomentations 5 minutes each
- Cold application between each fomentation 30 seconds each
- Begin with heat and end with cold
- Use cool sponging for face and cold compress to forehead
- Simultaneous hot foot bath
- Avoid incomplete reactions by keeping person warm and resting after treatment.

HOT FOOT BATH

- Influenza, colds, headache, sinusitis, local inflammation of feet, pain, pelvic congestion.
- Materials: Foot tub or container large enough to submerge both feet above the ankles, cold compress, towel, sheet and blanket, pitcher, check original material.

HOT HALF BATH

Influenza, colds, muscle pain, pain and spasm in arthritis, stiffness, fatigue, viral infections.

HOT AND COLD CONTRAST BATH

Congestive headaches, sprains, strains, trauma, poor circulation, skin ulcers, infections (2-6 x per day to stimulate local defenses against infection), osteoarthritis, congestion.

HEATING COMPRESS

- Throat—sore throat, tonsillitis, laryngitis
- Chest—chest colds, pneumonia, cough
- Safety precautions when using heat
- Avoid heat to the area that has decreased sensation or markedly decreased circulation to the area: diabetics, paralyzed, unconscious persons, peripheral vascular disease, bleeding (unless used very hot).
- Use milder treatments to the young or aged.
- Avoid incomplete reactions by keeping person warm and resting after treatment

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HERBS and their uses

- Aloe Vera: **internally**—peptic ulcers, colitis —**externally**—burns, dermatitis
- Buchu: cystitis, urinary tract infections, diuresis
- Catnip: sleep, nausea, colic, diarrhea, nervousness
- Chamomile: indigestion, gas, fever, to increase appetite, colic
- Goldenseal: healing to mucous membranes, fever blisters, colitis, infections on skin
- Hops: sedative, sleep
- Mint: nausea, slight stimulus
- Mullein: cough, chest problems
- Red Clover: tonic, menopause
- Red Raspberry: pregnancy, menopause
- Slippery Elm: cough, colds, soothe stomach
- Comfrey: externally—skin ulcers, burns, bruises, moisturizing and cleansing to skin

CHARCOAL and its uses

- To reduce inflammation, to absorb poisons
- Internally—sores in mouth, gum infections, sore throat, gas, indigestion, ulcers, colitis, diarrhea, poisonings, infections—vaginal, kidney, and liver
- Externally—impetigo, dermatitis, lacerations, insect and snake bites, eye infections, pain

Poultice:

- 3 T flaxseed or 2 T cornstarch. Mix, bring to a boil long enough to thicken.
- 1 T charcoal
- 1 c water

Slurry water:

- 1 T charcoal, allow to settle
- 4 c water

Use the clear top water for drinking

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