

Healing Applications

Compresses, Inhalations, Poultices, and Soaks



Compresses, soaks, poultices, and inhalations are excellent ways of addressing an illness through the medium of the skin. In the following pages we have listed some basic procedures. At first these pages may seem complicated, but with practice you will find them easy and satisfying. Join or organize a home health-care workshop to practice these applications. Your children will enjoy your practicing on them, or on their dolls.

ARNICA COMPRESS

for bruises and sprains

PROCEDURE Dilute 1 part Arnica Essence to 9 parts water as a cool compress to the forehead or as a compress for bruising. For a sprained ankle take a cool wet arnica compress and cover with a wool wrap. Continue to add moisture under the wool wrap, until swelling is down, then apply Arnica Ointment. Never put arnica on open wounds.

CALENDULA COMPRESS OR SOAK

for inflammations and abrasions

PROCEDURE Dilute 1 part Calendula Essence to 9 parts water as a cool compress or wash. Use as a hot soak for boils.

CASTOR OIL PACK

for deep infection, congestion, cysts, and hard-to-heal injuries

YOU WILL NEED 6 ounces castor oil, 1 teaspoon baking soda dissolved into 1 pint cool water. Wool flannel cloth, plastic sheet (or trash bag), hot water bottle, and a large, old bath towel.

PROCEDURE

- a) Warm castor oil by placing the bottle in a pan of hot water.
- b) Fold the flannel so that it is 4 layers thick. Lay flannel on the plastic sheet and saturate it with the warmed oil.
- c) Apply flannel to the area to be treated and cover with plastic sheet.
- d) Cover with an old towel and place the hot water bottle over it. Leave it on for 1 hour or longer if needed (add more warm water to hot water bottle if needed).

General Compress Procedure

- a) Prepare the tea or essence.
- b) Roll both ends of a long wool wrap (insert a cotton inner cloth when sensitivity to wool exists).
- c) Lay the child (or the limb) on top of this roll.
- d) Take a silk or a cotton cloth 3 times the size of the area and fold until it is 3 layers thick, to make a little roll.
- e) Place this in the center part of a dish towel, and roll the dish towel next. Place in a bowl, ends hanging over the edge, and pour the tea over the middle part of the cloth. Let it soak.
- f) Grab the ends of the dish towel and wring it out as firmly as you can.
- g) Remove the hot cotton compress from the wringing towel. Briefly “air” it a bit above the area to be covered to avoid burning.
- h) Quickly apply (keep it folded in 3 layers).
- i) Immediately grasp the wool roll from both sides, wrap it around with no cotton showing, and tuck it in. Cover with clothing or a warm towel. Optional: Place a rather flat hot water bottle on top of the wool wrap.
- j) Cover your child warmly.
- k) After 15-30 minutes, remove cotton compress, while leaving the wool still on, and let child rest for another 15-20 minutes. If it cools off sooner, reheat the compress and apply again.

Soak. An essence or tea diluted in hot, cool or cold water, for submerging a limb. A hot soak with either calendula tea or essence draws splinters; a soak in cool black tea helps alleviate burns. A warm rosemary foot bath helps to stimulate circulation and relieves a headache.

Room Inhalation. Placing oil or a plant extract in the well of a vaporizer or in a bowl on the radiator to diffuse the aroma into the room. See Lavender, Lemon, Eucalyptus Room Inhalations.

Steam Inhalation. An oil or plant extract added to a bowl of steaming hot water. Mother and child inhale the steam together, while having their heads covered with a large towel or sheet. Avoid chilling, and keep hair dry by letting the child wear a hat. Julia, a most creative mom from Orange County, drapes blankets over the dining room table, places the steaming bowl with lemons under one corner of the table, and crawls with her flashlight and her little children under the table to tell them a story about the “Lemon Eskimos.” Handle the bowl with great care! Place the bowl inside a heavier ceramic bowl to avoid accidents. See Chamomile Steam Inhalation.

See *Eucalyptus Bladder Compress*.

Compress. A natural fiber cloth saturated with the strained extract of an essential oil or plant, either hot, cool, or cold, placed on the body and covered. See Arnica, Calendula Lemon, Chamomile Compresses.

Poultice. Natural fiber folded into an envelope shape, holding hot or cool chopped plants or herbs, then applied to the body and covered. See Onion Ear Poultice, Ginger, Mustard and Potato Poultices.

Oil Compress. A cloth saturated with herbal oil, then folded, warmed, and applied directly to the skin, with a flannel or wool wrap covering it. See Eucalyptus Bladder Compress.

e) Afterward, cleanse the skin with baking soda mixture. Store the flannel in a plastic bag or glass jar in the refrigerator for further use. When you repeat applications you can add some more castor oil. Change flannel when it starts smelling rancid.

CHAMOMILE COMPRESS *for inflamed eyes, tummy aches, menstrual cramps, sensory over-stimulation, or upsets*

REMEMBER Don't use with a high fever, excessive bellyache, or any suspicion of appendicitis or kidney infection.

YOU WILL NEED Boiling water, chamomile flowers (or chamomile tea bags), strainer, silk/cotton wrap, wool wrap, wringing towel (cotton tea towel), bowl, hot water bottle. Procedure:

➔GENERAL COMPRESS PROCEDURE

CHAMOMILE POULTICE *calming stomach upset, cramps, and colic*

PROCEDURE

- a) Place a small handful of chamomile flowers in a saucepan. Add enough boiling water to soak flowers.
- b) Cover pan and let steep for 2-3 minutes.
- c) Place flowers in the center of a tea towel or cheesecloth.
- d) Fold the sides and close with a rubber band or string. Proceed as directed under General Compress Procedure.

EPSOM SALT BATHS

See instructions on the box of Epsom Salts.

EUCALYPTUS ROOM OR STEAM INHALATIONS *for colds, coughs, and chest congestion*

PROCEDURE Sprinkle a few drops of eucalyptus oil in a bowl of lukewarm water and put on radiator, or add to steam vaporizer. Other helpful oils are rosemary or lavender.

EUCALYPTUS OIL BLADDER COMPRESS *for infection*

PROCEDURE

- Saturate one side of a triple-folded flannel cloth with the oil.
- Fold the cloth once more, place in a plastic bag, and warm up between 2 hot water bottles, or on the lid of a pot with some boiling water.
- Apply and cover with a thick wool wrap or towel. Keep the compress on overnight. Never apply essential oils directly to the skin, always dilute with some olive oil.

NOTE For bedwetting, use St. John's Wort Oil instead.

FLAXSEED (LINSEED) POULTICE *soothes chronic inflammation, irritated mucus membranes, boils, sinusitis, and congestion*

PROCEDURE

- Bring water and flaxseeds to a boil (1 part flaxseeds to 2 parts water).
- Stir constantly, so it becomes a thick mush.
- Put flaxseed mush in the center of a dish towel, fold sides over, and close with masking tape.
- Apply and cover with a wool wrap. Optional: place a hot water bottle on top. Note: Any

herb, such as smartweed, elm bark, hops, mullein, or any other herbs recommended, can be added. Use as a poultice on cold sores, boils, inflammations, skin ulcers, and wounds. Change poultice at least every 2 hours; have a new, hot poultice ready to apply before the old one is removed.

GINGER SINUS POULTICE

for sinusitis

also → **FLAXSEED POULTICE**

REMEMBER Be careful! Ginger can burn. Only for older children and adults. This is for sinus infections and is not useful for hay fever, simple head colds, and so forth. An alternative to ginger is horseradish, but use only for older children or adults. If you use horseradish, place poultice instead on the back of the neck for 4-8 minutes, depending on the sensitivity of the skin.

YOU WILL NEED Fresh grated ginger root (rhizome), grater, teaspoon, cheesecloth, wool blanket, facial tissue, lanolin or un-petroleum jelly.

PROCEDURE

- Bring all ingredients to the bedside and cover the child warmly.
- Put a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel at the feet. Feet must be warm while receiving this treatment.
- Grate the ginger root very fine. Or make a thick paste from ginger powder.
- Place 1/2 teaspoon of ginger in the middle of two pieces of cheesecloth (4"x4"). Fold the edges in and close with masking tape. Cut 2 rectangles of facial tissue or cotton cloth (1 1/2" x 1 1/2") and apply un-petroleum jelly to one side.
- To prevent eye irritation apply the tissues with the jelly side down on closed eyes.
- Then apply poultices over the sinuses and hold them there for your child until the skin turns

pink. Check skin color every few minutes.

REMEMBER: Leaving poultices on too long can cause blisters.

- g) Remove the tissues and wipe eyes with a clean tissue.
- h) Clean skin with a warm washcloth and rub a little olive oil on the area.
- i) Have your child rest for at least 30 minutes. Use only once a day if the skin can tolerate the ginger poultice.

LAVENDER ROOM INHALATION

for relieving stress

Put Lavender Oil or Lavender Bath Oil in a bowl on the radiator, or into the vaporizer.

LEMON CALF WRAP *to gently reduce and mediate fever symptoms*

Lemon helps to disperse excessive heat and metabolic activity from the head area.

CONTRAINDICATION Cold feet or absence of fever.

YOU WILL NEED Organic lemons, bowl (glass or pottery), knife, warm water, 2 cotton wraps (approx. 2 yards long and 6 inches wide, 2 wool wraps or long wool socks).

BASIC CARE Dress child warmly. Ensure warm feet with a hot water bottle before applying the wraps!

PROCEDURE

- a) Roll wool and cotton wraps.
- b) Cut the lemon in half; place halves in the bowl filled with warm water.
- c) With the knife, cut each lemon-half underwater 5 times from the center outward. Pressing the

lemon juice out on the bottom of the bowl, the lemons become like “stars.”

- d) Soak the cotton rolls in the lemon water.
- e) Wring out the first cotton wrap, leave damp, but not dripping.
- f) Apply the wrap: Covering the toes, rolling around the foot and leg, and finishing below the knee.
- g) Immediately cover the moist wrap in the same manner, with the wool. Avoid gaps (trick: use masking tape) and cover cotton completely. Then do the other leg.
- h) Cover child warmly.
- i) Check cotton wrap after 15 minutes: if dry or cool, remove and apply freshly dipped wrap. If warm and moist, leave on for 20 minutes.

CHAMOMILE STEAM INHALATION *to loosen congestion (bronchitis), soothe membranes of the nose and oropharynx, ease ear infections by opening plugged Eustachian tubes, and speed healing of a cold*

YOU WILL NEED Boiling water, saucepan, bowl, strainer, chamomile flowers (or chamomile tea bags), hat, large towel or blanket, hot water bottle.

PROCEDURE First feel your child’s feet. For cold feet, use a hot water bottle. Cover your child’s hair with a hat or towel to avoid chilling afterward. Pour boiling water over a small handful of chamomile flowers and steep in a covered pan for 1-3 minutes. Pour tea through a strainer into a glass bowl. Place the bowl on the table in a heavier bowl for safety. Sit with your warmly dressed child on your lap, or next to you, breathing the steam. Immediately cover up with a large towel for another 5-10 minutes. Rest after completion of application for another 20-30 minutes.

HOT LEMON CHEST COMPRESS

to help overcome a lingering cough, stubborn chest congestion, and asthmatic wheezing

YOU WILL NEED Cotton cloth or washcloth, lemon, boiling water, knife and fork, wringing cloth (hand towel), warm shirt, wool blanket. Have everything ready by the bed. If the feet are not warm, use a hot water bottle to warm them.

PROCEDURE

- a) Roll the compress cloth.
- b) Place inside the wringing cloth.
- c) Pour boiling water into a medium size bowl. Let cool 1 minute.
- d) Add a lemon: cut and score the lemon in the water with knife and fork, then press to release essential oils.
- e) Place wringing cloth packet in bowl with ends hanging over the sides. Soak, then remove and wring until dripping stops.
- f) Remove compress from inside wringing cloth.
- g) Apply compress carefully to the chest, as hot as the child can tolerate it.
- h) Quickly wrap wool and cover the cotton compress completely to avoid cooling.
- i) Cover child in warm clothes and blanket.
- j) Replace compress when no longer hot (up to 3 times). Rest while leaving the wool covering still in place. Apply once or twice a day. **NOTE:** Consider using the Plantain/Beeswax Cream from Uriel Pharmacy for overnight. Rub cream on chest, back, and throat. To enhance the effect, wrap the chest with a flannel and then a wool wrap.

LEMON FOOT BATHS

for aching, tired feet

Fill a basin with water and lemon oil, lemon bath oil or lemon juice. Immerse feet up to ankles.

LEMON ROOM INHALATION

for asthmatic wheezing, bronchitis, and to freshen the air

Cut and score lemon under lukewarm water to preserve all essential oils then place entire bowl on radiator.

LEMON THROAT WRAP

for sore throat in older children and adults

Use as chest wrap for small children and babies. Proceed as directed under Hot Lemon Chest Compress, but apply to the neck. Another method is to arrange 5-8 thin lemon slices in a cotton cloth or cheesecloth. Fold edges over, and close with masking tape. Apply directly to the throat and cover with a wool wrap. Use properly sized cotton and wool wraps.

MUSTARD FOOT BATH *for colds, chills, to prevent migraine*

Add 2 tablespoons of yellow mustard powder to warm water. Once adjusted, add a pitcher of hot water, enough to cover the child's calves. Mustard Baths are an excellent way to draw an illness out.

MUSTARD CHEST POULTICE

for chest congestion, bronchitis, and pneumonia

NOTE Only for older children and adults. (See instructions for Ginger Poultice.)

Bring all ingredients to the bedside and drape the child warmly. Secure hot water bottle at feet with towel. Feet must always be warm while receiving any application!

PROCEDURE

- a) Drape a large towel and the wool wrap across the bed.
- b) Spread mustard powder out in the center of the cloth (add wheat flour for a milder effect).
- c) Fold sides over and make an envelope with masking tape. Roll both sides tightly toward the middle.
- d) Lay your child on top of the wool wrap, uncover the chest.
- e) Soak the roll in hot water. Squeeze out carefully.
- f) Apply quickly to the chest and cover immediately with wool wrap.
- g) Remove the compress after the skin has turned pink.
- h) Cleanse the chest with a hot washcloth, and rub skin gently with some eucalyptus or olive oil.
- i) Let rest for at least 45 minutes to 1 hour after the treatment. **REMEMBER: Leaving it on too long can cause blisters.** Repeat once per day if the skin tolerates the mustard.

ONION EAR POULTICE

helps increase circulation and dissolves heavy congestion

This is very effective in loosening the painful congestion in the ear, just as an onion draws tears from the eyes. A number of different variations for applying warm, raw, and cut-up white or yellow onion will work. Some prefer a slice, others a minced mixture, while some even cook the chopped onion for a minute. Some mothers put a few drops of warm olive oil with raw onion juice on a cotton ball and place in the ear. Don't put anything in the ear if it is draining or discharging. Remember: For earaches, it is important to keep the ear and the entire head warm. Keep a wool stocking cap pulled over the ears.

NOTE Onion Poultices can also be applied on the chest or on the foot soles. Onion Chest Poultices

work great for babies or young children with chest congestion. Onion Foot Poultices can be used for a teething infant, or for a child with earaches, a lingering head cold, or a bladder infection.

POTATO CHEST POULTICE *to soothe cough and sore throat, to dissolve phlegm, and to ease muscle pains and headaches*

YOU WILL NEED 4-6 potatoes, compress cloth, flannel wrap, wool wrap, hot water bottle, safety pins, masking tape.

PROCEDURE

- a) Cook the potatoes with skin.
- b) Place potatoes at center of cotton cloth or old sock (2 and 1/2 times size of application area).
- c) Fold the sides over.
- d) The fun part: You or the child can now mash the potatoes within the cloth with the fists.
- e) Close the package with masking tape or safety pins, and let it cool off for 5-8 minutes.
- f) Drape wool outer wrap and inner flannel in proper area of the bed.
- g) Position the wool wrap under the child and uncover the chest or designated area.
- h) Check poultice heat by holding it to your cheek before giving it. Apply and wait a while to make sure the child can tolerate it, before closing the outer wrap. Add a flat hot water bottle after a while if you wish to prolong the heat.
- i) Leave as long as is comfortable. Remove when cooled off. Repeat at any time.

NOTE This is the best source for moist heat! The intense heat of potatoes soothes both body and soul, thanks to its intense warming and pacifying attributes. A great application for beginners, since it stays warm for a long time. **Nevertheless, caution is indicated, since at first it will be very hot.** 🚫