

Chapter 40: Heat and Cold Applications

Applying Warm Compresses			
		Name:	
		Date:	
<i>Remember to promote:</i>			
Dignity • Independence • Individualized Care • Preferences • Privacy • Safety			
Pre-Procedure	S	U	Comments
1. Identify the client, according to employer policy.			
2. Explain the procedure to the client.			
3. Practise proper hand hygiene.			
4. Collect the following supplies:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Basin			
<input type="checkbox"/> Bath thermometer			
<input type="checkbox"/> Small towel, washcloth, or gauze squares			
<input type="checkbox"/> Ties, tape, or rolled gauze			
<input type="checkbox"/> Bath towel, large towel, or clean sheet			
<input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof pad			
5. Provide for privacy.			
Procedure	S	U	Comments
6. Place the waterproof pad under the body part to be treated.			
7. Fill the basin one-half to two-thirds full with hot water, as directed by your supervisor. Measure the water temperature.			
8. Place the compress in the water.			
9. Wring out the compress.			
10. Apply the compress to the area. Note the time.			
11. Ask the client if the compress feels comfortable. If the client is comfortable, cover the compress quickly with plastic wrap. Cover the plastic wrap with a bath towel (FIGURE 40.2). Secure the towel in place with ties, tape, or rolled gauze.			
12. Place the call bell within reach. Follow			

the care plan for bed rail use.*			
13. Check the area every 5 minutes. The compress should never be applied longer than 15 minutes. Check for redness and complaints of pain, discomfort, or numbness. Remove the compress if any of these signs occur, and tell your supervisor immediately.			
14. Change the compress if it cools down.			
15. Remove the compress after 15 minutes or sooner, as directed by your supervisor. Pat the area dry with a towel.			
Post-Procedure	S	U	Comments
16. Provide for the client's safety and comfort.			
17. Remove privacy measures.			
18. Clean the equipment. Discard disposable items. Wear gloves for this step.			
19. Follow employer policy for handling soiled linen.			
20. Practise proper hand hygiene.			
Report and Record your actions and observations, according to employer policy.			
<i>*Steps marked with an asterisk may not apply in community settings.</i>			