

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

## Techniques

### 1. FULL FOMENTATIONS WITH ALTERNATING HOT AND COLD (REVULSIVE)

Fomentation Pack (Steam Pack) and Cover

A. Steam pack of one of the following materials:

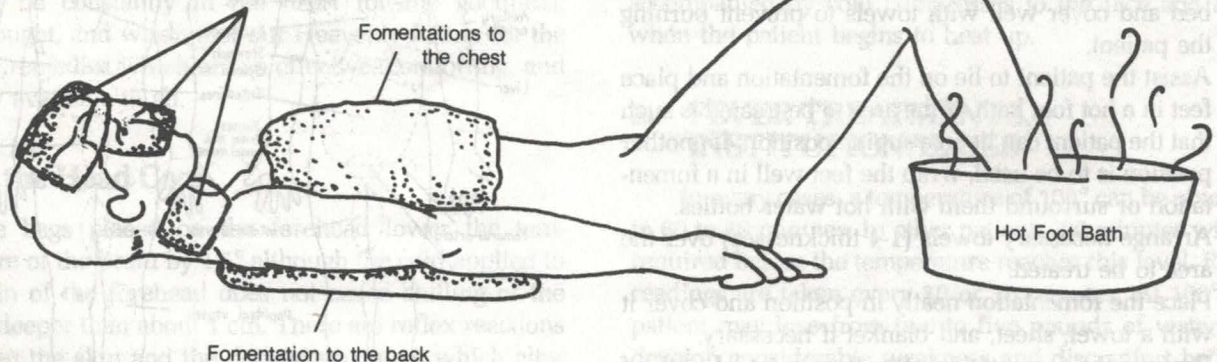
1. 50% synthetic or wool, with 50% cotton
2. Brushed cotton canvas type
3. Other loosely woven but substantial blanket material
4. Thick terry cloth or Turkish towels cut or folded to make about 4 thicknesses

Wool has a drawback in that it gives off an unpleasant odor on heating, but holds heat nicely. The piece of material for the first three types above should be 36" × 30" or 31" and should be folded in thirds so that the finished dimensions are approximately 12" × 31". For terry cloth or Turkish towels, cut or fold the material so

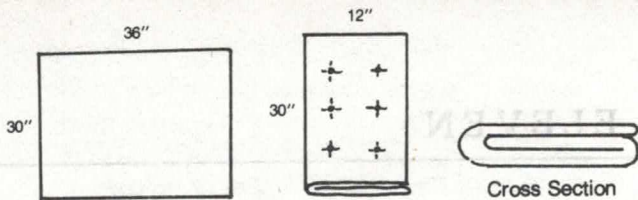
that the finished product will be four thicknesses, and measuring 12" × 30". Sew the pack together at both ends, or make about 6 quilting stitches with heavy thread tied securely, to hold the ends in place. Different size packs may be made by varying either length or width. Cravat packs can be made by doubling a piece of material 8" × 14" to 4" × 14", which will fit the adult neck.

B. The pack cover should be a wool or acrylic piece measuring 34" × 34" for general use, or correspondingly altered in size for special areas. Fomentation covers must be large enough to overlap all parts of the pack and could be as large as 40" × 32" to 36". They may be made of synthetic blanket material, a light-weight, easily laundered, moisture resistant material. Neither the pack nor the cover should be of stiff material as the pack should drape easily around the body contours.

Cold compresses to keep head cool



Full fomentations include a steam pack to the back, a series of three steam packs to the chest, a hot foot bath kept quite warm, and cold compresses to the face, head, or neck. The steam pack at the back may extend the full length of the spine, from the neck to the coccyx for the maximum reaction.



The fomentation pack is made easily from many types of material. Here shown is a 30 x 36" piece of thick, brushed cotton laundry flannel folded in thirds and fastened by quilting with thread, string, or colored yarn.

### Equipment for Fomentation.

1. Three or four fomentation packs as hot as can be tolerated
2. Two to four fomentation covers
3. Four Turkish towels
4. Two wash cloths, for cold compresses, and cold mitten friction
5. One or two patient sheets (Extra sheet and blanket may be needed).
6. One foot tub with water approximately 105° to 110°
7. One basin with cold or ice water
8. One glass and straw
9. A canner or other large kettle rigged with a false bottom or rack

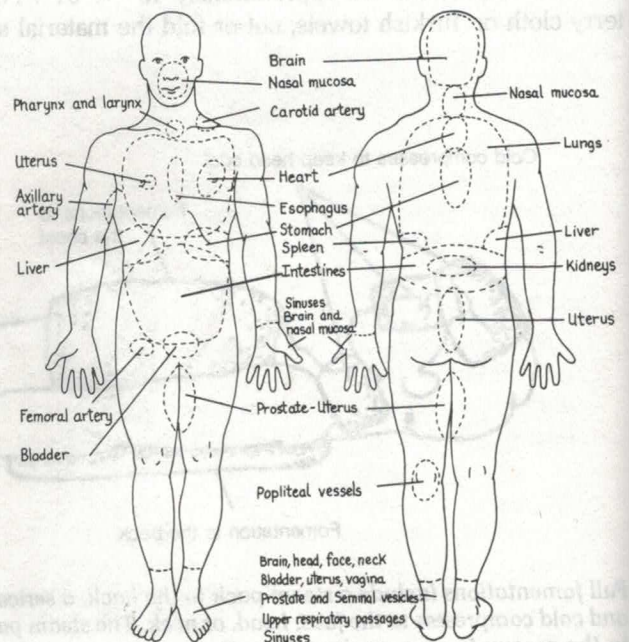
### Procedure

1. If uncertain, consult chart for reflex areas to determine best location for application of treatment.
2. Protect the bed by a doubled blanket or a plastic sheet such as shower curtain.
3. Assist the patient to undress and drape in sheet.
4. Place one or two fomentations for the spine on the bed and cover well with towels to prevent burning the patient.
5. Assist the patient to lie on the fomentation and place feet in a hot foot bath, if the area to be treated is such that the patient can lie in a supine position. If another position is to be used, wrap the feet well in a fomentation or surround them with hot water bottles.
6. Arrange necessary towels (1-4 thicknesses) over the area to be treated.
7. Place the fomentation neatly in position and cover it with a towel, sheet, and blanket if necessary.
8. Remove the fomentation after the desired length of time, usually 3-6 minutes, and replace it promptly with a cold compress for 30-60 seconds; dry the skin after the cold application.

9. Use a cold compress to the head or throat after 3-5 minutes, or when sweating begins.
10. Have the patient drink water, room temperature or hotter.
11. Inquire as to tolerance; perhaps more hot water could be added to the foot tub. The skin may get too hot at sensitive points.
12. Repeat numbers 6, 7 and 8 two or three times or more depending on the case, spending as little time during changes as possible.
13. Rub the thighs with a dry towel to remove perspiration.
14. Keep the foot bath hot by frequent additions of hot water, using care to avoid discomfort (see special instructions for a hot foot bath).
15. If indicated, give a cold mitten friction, soothing back rub, or shower to finish. Otherwise pat or rub briskly to dry or give an alcohol rub. Allow no wasted time as it is important to finish promptly to allow the reaction to proceed unhindered. There should be no hint of haste, but a calm, unhurried (never dawdling) demeanor should be manifested by all in the treatment room.
16. Before removing the hot foot tub, pour cold water over the feet and dry well between the toes.

### Reflex Areas

Apply treatment to hatched areas



## Precautions

1. Avoid drafts, noise, interruptions.
2. Avoid chilling and unnecessary fanning.
3. Avoid burning with hot fomentations.
4. Expose only the part under treatment.
5. Observe patient carefully for comfort, safety, and proper reaction.

## Effects

1. Pain relief when used very hot for 3 to 5 minutes. Omit the cold compress in pleurisy, dysmenorrhea, and in arthritis if pain worsens when cold is applied.
2. Flushing and cleansing of tissues
3. Mobilizing white blood cells to fight infection
4. A tonic in apathetic states if the fomentations are brief and very hot
5. A stimulus to blood circulation when brief, very hot applications are followed by short, very cold compresses
6. Soothing for the nerves if moderate and prolonged—6-10 minutes—for spasm of muscles or tension
7. Sweat production to increase toxin elimination

## Contraindications

1. Diabetes—do not apply to the feet.
2. Paralyzed or unconscious patients—do not use due to danger of burning.
3. Heart attacks—take care to place an ice bag over the heart before fomentations are laid on.

A treatment given tenderly and with sympathy and tact will do more good than the most skilled treatment given in a cold, indifferent way. "Why need anyone be ignorant of God's remedies—hot-water fomentations and cold and hot compresses."<sup>87</sup> The prayer of thanksgiving should be constantly in the heart for the goodness, forethought, and wisdom of our Heavenly Father for the simple remedies which are so effective, comforting, and readily available to all.

## Keep the Head Cool

Ice bags placed on the forehead lower the temperature of the brain by 1.5° although the cold applied to the skin of the forehead does not cause chilling of the tissue deeper than about 1 cm. There are reflex reactions between the skin and the deeper structures which alter the blood flow within the deep organs immediately beneath the skin surface when heat, cold, or irritants are applied to the surface. These are called cutaneo-visceral reflexes. It is by means of these reflexes that the brain

temperature is lowered when cold compresses are applied to the forehead.

There is a depression of electroencephalographic (EEG) activity as the body temperature goes above 104°. While abnormal waves have been observed in some studies on patients with far-advanced cancer, there appears to be the likelihood that the widespread disease, possibly cerebral metastasis, could have been the aggravating factor in those cases, and not the elevation of temperature. In febrile convulsions in children it appears that the toxic element producing the fever is the stimulating source for the convulsions and not the increased temperature, an agent that in itself causes an actual depression of EEG activity.<sup>88</sup>

Cold applications to the head are used to prevent congestion of the brain, or to relieve congestion if it is already present. The application of cold to the head is usually in the form of a cold towel compress; but an ice cap, an ice collar, or a poultice of ice are sometimes used for special purposes. Cold sponging of the face is also advantageous. The effort to keep the head cool may include cold compresses to the neck, if the heat applied to the body is very intense, or very prolonged. Generally speaking, all hot and warm applications and many local applications such as the hot foot bath should be accompanied by cool or cold to the head, particularly if the treatment lasts longer than about seven minutes, or if the body temperature is expected to rise higher than 100°.

In some individuals, the application of heat to a localized area of the body results in dilatation of the blood vessels of the brain, making it desirable to apply cold to the head to prevent congestion. The application of cold causes contraction of the carotid and vertebral arteries in all their branches.<sup>89</sup>

In this way the amount of blood which flows to the brain is decreased and the temperature of the brain is reduced. Even sitz baths and wet sheet packs should be accompanied by cold compresses to the face and head when the patient begins to heat up.