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Immune-Stimulating Home Hyperthermia

This handout is for informational purposes only and does not replace the advice of your healthcare provider.

Hydrotherapy is the application of hot and/or cold water to increase vitality and stimulate the immune system. It has been practiced in many cultures around the world for thousands of years. One example of hydrotherapy that is especially effective for the common cold is hyperthermia. This approach induces a fever and raises the core body temperature, thereby increasing the efficiency of immune system. A fever is the body's way of combating infections and is the sign of a healthy immune system. In some cases it's helpful to induce a fever. This approach is done in two phases: (1) hot soak, and (2) sweat phases. People frequently feel tired after doing home hyperthermia. It is best done in the evening before going to bed for the night.

Contraindications and precautions

If you have certain medical conditions you should avoid hydrotherapy. These include:

- Heart disease or vascular disease, including hypertension, intermittent claudication, weak connective tissue (relating to high risk for plaque rupturing), etc.
- Vascular insufficiency or stasis, including blood clots, deep vein thrombosis, phlebitis, etc.
- Asthma
- Pregnancy
- Diabetes
- Raynaud's syndrome or phenomenon
- People with a fever > 100° F should only do this home hyperthermia if directed by your doctor.

Discontinue the hyperthermia if at any time you feel dizzy, lightheaded, or nauseous.

Instructions

Prepare all materials for both phases before starting.

Hot soak phase

The goal of this phase is to raise the core body temperature.

1. Draw a bath with water that is as hot as you can stand it. Caution should be taken not to burn yourself.
2. Place a cup of cool water next to the bathtub.
3. Soak for 30 minutes.
4. Optional: add drops of soothing essential oils, such as eucalyptus or sage.
5. Optional: make a hot cup of ginger or other tea to increase circulation.

Sweat phase

This phase follows the hot soak phase. The goal is to induce a sweat. Materials you will need: (1) one wool blanket, (2) one dry bed sheet, (3) a wool ski cap, and (4) if you have someone to help you, other blankets such as a down comforter or more wool blankets.

1. Unfold a wool blanket on the bed or other surface on which you will be lying.
2. Place a sheet on top of the wool blanket.
3. After drying off, put on your wool cap.
4. Lie on the sheet/wool blanket combo and wrap yourself in it like a burrito.
5. If someone is available to help you, ask them to cover you with additional blankets.
6. Lie in this, "mummy," position for 20–30 minutes and sweat.

CAUTION: If at any point you feel like you are getting too hot or feel claustrophobic, stop immediately. If you have someone to help you, they may monitor your temperature by checking it every five minutes with a thermometer. If your temperature gets to 102° F, stop the hyperthermia immediately. Place cool towels on your forehead and drink cold liquids to bring your temperature down. If you are unable to decrease your temperature, or if your temperature increases to 103°F or greater, take ibuprofen as recommended on the package, as well as placing cool towels on your forehead and drinking cold liquids. Once your temperature breaks, and begins to drop, stop using the cold towels and drinking cold liquids.