NURSING PROCEDURE 54-2
Applying Warm Moist Compresses and Packs

SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT
✔ Compress or pack
✔ Hot-pack machine or forceps
✔ Petroleum jelly (petrolatum)
✔ Aqua-K pad
✔ Gloves, if necessary

RECOMMENDED TECHNIQUE

1. Wash hands. Wear gloves if there is a break in your skin or the client’s skin.

2. Use a hot-pack machine set at the proper temperature. Otherwise, immerse the compress or pack in hot tap water (or heat the pack in a microwave for a one-time application).

3. Apply petroleum jelly to the client’s skin before applying the pack.

4. Place plastic or a dry pack over the moist compress.

5. Wring the compress or pack with forceps or wringer, removing as much water as possible. To wring out packs with forceps, clamp one forceps onto each end of the pack and twist them in opposite directions.

6. Shake the pack lightly, and apply it to the area gently at first, gradually pressing it against the skin.

7. Ask the client if the pack is too hot. If so, remove and shake it in the air briefly to lower its temperature.

8. Cover the moist compress or pack with a dry pack and moisture-proof cover. Omit this step if using the Aqua-K pad.

9. Change the pack as often as necessary to keep the area heated. Small compresses cool more quickly than large packs. Use an Aqua-K pad on top of the large warm, moist pack to keep it warm, if ordered.

10. Assess the condition of the client’s skin at least every 10 minutes.

11. Continue treatment for the prescribed time, and then remove the applications. Use packs for one client only. Discard them after removal, or save them to use again for that same client.
12. Dry the skin and cover it, as ordered. Be sure to wipe off any excess petrolatum.

13. Wash hands.

14. Document the treatment on the client’s chart, noting the client’s reaction.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDED TECHNIQUE (Continued)</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>NP</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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**KEY:** E = Excels  S = Satisfactory  NP = Needs Practice

☐ Pass  ☐ Fail

Student’s Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ________________

Instructor’s Signature: _________________________________________ Date: ________________

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