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ALTERNATING SITZ BATH

The sitz bath is an immersion bath with the person seated in a tub with water covering the hips, buttocks, and lower abdomen. It is used to decrease congestion and increase circulation to the pelvic and lower abdominal organs.

Indications

Sitz baths are used to treat vaginal infections, chronic urinary tract infections, pelvic inflammatory disease, hemorrhoids, fissures, prostatitis, constipation, insomnia, and neuralgias.

Contraindications

Open wounds or active bleeding, vaginal bleeding, (including excessive menstrual bleeding), prolapsed organs, acute lung congestion, acute inflammation, painful conditions with spasm or colic, pregnancy and heart problems. Use with caution in areas of decreased sensation (anesthesia, paralysis, neuropathy, etc) to avoid tissue damage, burns, etc.

Directions

1. Prepare a tub with hot water at a temperature of 105-109 degrees F. This range is about the same or slightly warmer than a typical hot tub. Do not exceed 110 degrees F. Fill the tub so that it comes to 1 inch above your navel when you are in a seated position.
2. Put a long towel in a separate, small ice water bath (a bucket or large bowl will suffice) placed next to the tub.
3. Sit in the hot bath for at least 3 minutes.
4. After hot bath, stand and, without wringing out towel, wrap the cold towel around pelvis like a diaper. Make sure that the towel is touching your skin all the way around. Do not allow the towel to come up higher than 1 inch below your navel. Leave on for 30 seconds. Return towel to ice bath.
5. Sit down in the hot bath for another 3 minutes.
6. Repeat cold towel wrap, as before, for 30 seconds.
7. Sit down in hot bath for another 3 minutes.
8. Repeat cold towel wrap, as before, for 30 seconds.
9. Following the third cold towel wrap, get out of tub and dry off.

Resources

1. Pizzorno, J., Murray, M., Roberts, N. and Barry, R. *Textbook of Natural Medicine, 2nd Ed.* 1999. Churchill Livingstone. Edinburgh, Scotland. Pp 345-356, 1474-1477.
2. Thrash, A. and Thrash, C. *Home Remedies: Hydrotherapy, Massage, Charcoal, and Other Simple Treatments.* 1981. Thrash Publications. Seale, Alabama. Pp 40, 44, 73, 76.