

How to Make an Herbal Fomentation



[Healing Waters Clinic & Herb Shop](#)

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26 Clark St. (Just South of King St. on US-1) • St. Augustine, FL 32084 • 904-826-1965

Definition and Working Principle

An Herbal Fomentation is the application of an herbal tea to the body surface by placing a cotton cloth soaked with tea on a specific area. When a fomentation is applied to the whole body it is called an *Herbal Wrap*.

Herbal fomentations are easy to use with a little practice and are ideal for home therapy. The therapeutic principles of the herbs are absorbed through the skin and mucous lining of the tissues and while they directly benefit the local site, they can also provide some measure of systemic healing.

Directions

1. Which Herbs to Use:

Make herbal tea of choice. If consulting an herbalist, your herbalist will give you specific herbs. Most fomentation teas are formulas comprised of several herbs. Two examples of teas used as fomentations are given below:

Example 1: Arnica, Comfrey, and Thyme for injured joints or inflammation of the tissues where you are trying to “get the red out.”

Example 2: Mullein, Ginger, and Calendula for applying to areas of lymphatic stagnation, particularly around the chest, lower neck, arm pits, and groin/inner thighs.

2. How Much Water, How Much Herbs:

The rule of thumb is 4 to 8 ounces of herbs to 4 quarts of water. You will need a 5 quart pot to cook the tea in. Bring water to boil, then turn down to simmer (low boil). Add the herbs.

3. How Long to Cook:

Most herbal teas for fomentation should be cooked at least 20 to 30 minutes, minimum. This is considered an *Herbal Infusion*. You can let the herbs steep longer, perhaps as long as an hour, especially if the herbs you have chosen are roots and barks.

4. Strain the Herbs Out:

After the tea cools down a bit, strain into another container, and discard the spent herbs. Put the tea back in the cooking pot. You may need to reheat the tea slightly to make it hot for the fomentation.

5. Apply the Fomentation:



Use a clean cotton cloth, old flannel strip, or cotton hand towel to dip into the tea. Grab both ends of the cloth or towel and slightly twist the ends so the middle can be dipped into the tea. After dipping the cloth, twist the ends together again, so that excess tea is dripped back into the pot.



Take the tea-soaked towel and touch it to your skin (or on the person you're helping) to see if the temperature is tolerable. If too hot, open the cloth and wave it in the air a couple of times. This will help cool it down significantly. Apply again to skin to see if the heat is all right. The goal is to

keep the fomentation as hot as bearable, but not so hot that you or your friend feel it is burning. Experience will determine how this works.



6. Repeat:

After a few minutes of application to a body part, the fomentation will cool down. Soak the cloth in the tea and repeat the process several times, *at least four times*. After application, the skin should show slight reddening as the hot towel has brought circulation and healing to the area.

7. Storage and Reuse:

You should apply an herbal fomentation at least once a day for maximum effectiveness. It can be used two or even three times a day if wished, but once or twice is fine for most people.

The tea in the cooking pot should be reserved and left covered on the stove or set aside out of the way. Every day the tea can be brought to boil and reused for the fomentation. The tea can be used on the average of seven or eight days. Even applying the fomentation two-three times a day, there should be enough tea to last the whole week.

8. How Long to Keep This Up:

For most acute conditions, a week or two of herbal fomentation application is enough. Chronic conditions of ill health or tissue damage will often take longer, possibly as long as a month or two.

If you have any question, contact us at:
Healing Waters Clinic & Herb Shop
907-826-1965
info@healingwatersclinic.com
www.healingwatersclinic.com