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## WARMING SOCKS

Now that cold and flu season is in full-swing, here is an idea for home treatment to help ward off the common cold. The warming socks treatment is best if repeated for three nights in a row at the first signs of a cold. It is also useful for sore throat or any inflammation or infection of the throat, ear infections, headaches, migraines, nasal congestion, coughs, and sinus infections/congestion.

**Why it works:** This treatment acts reflexively to increase circulation and decrease congestion. Areas which are congested or inflamed will give up proportionately more blood than areas which are not inflamed. The internal blood vessel areas for which there is the most use for this hydrostatic derivative method are the brain (head), lungs and pelvic organs.

During the night, the small blood vessels (capillaries) in your feet will dilate in response to the coolness of the socks – reflexively drawing blood from other areas of your body. As your feet become warm, the capillaries automatically begin to contract – pushing the warm blood out to cool the now over warm feet. As your feet cool off, the process begins again. This continues through until the socks are dry, and/or have reached normal body temperature.

Activating the surface capillaries in your body doesn't seem like much, but they do carry about 800 times the amount of blood carried by the major vessels. So you're actually moving a large quantity of blood between your head and feet. Whenever your blood circulates, it must pass through your lungs – dumping off CO<sub>2</sub> and picking up oxygen. It must also pass through the liver – which cleans the blood and renews its nutrient and white blood cell supply. And the blood must pass through the spleen, which picks off old red blood cells. With each pass, the blood is cleaned up and reoxygenated.

It has a sedating action and many patients report that they sleep much better during the treatment. This treatment is also effective for pain relief and increases the healing response during acute infections.

In order to do this treatment you will need, 1 pair thin cotton socks (athletic socks work fine), 1 pair thick wool socks, a towel and a warm bath or footbath. The directions are as follows:

1. Take a pair of cotton socks and soak them completely with cold water. If you tend to be cold or have low vitality, try using cool water during the first treatment rather than cold water.
2. Warm your feet. The treatment may not be as effective if your feet are not warmed first. Warming can be accomplished by soaking your feet in warm water for at least 5-10 minutes or taking a warm bath for 5-10 minutes.
3. Dry off your feet and body with a dry towel.
4. Wring the cotton socks out thoroughly so they do not drip and place the socks on your feet.
5. Put the thick wool socks over the cotton socks.
6. Get in bed. Cover well and sleep all night with socks on, it should be relaxing and not uncomfortably cold. If you are unable to sleep because of the cold socks consider removing the socks and soaking your feet again, this time using cool rather than cold water to wet the cotton socks. Your feet and the cotton socks should be warm and dry in the morning. If your feet are cool or the cotton sock is still damp, consider increasing the length of the hot foot soak.

As an alternative or complement to warming socks try throat or chest warming compresses. Warm the throat or chest with a hot washcloth or shower. Dry the skin thoroughly and apply a thin cotton wrap (to throat) or thin cotton T-shirt (to chest) that has been soaked in cold water and wrung out thoroughly. Cover this with a wool scarf (throat) or wool sweater (chest). Go to bed. By morning, the scarf or T-shirt should be warm and dry. The same cautions for the warming socks treatment apply here.

This treatment should be used with caution on anyone with decreased or compromised sensory abilities such as infants, the elderly, or diabetics as they are at greater risk for heat and cold injuries. Do not use this treatment over areas of hemorrhage, gastric ulcers, malignancy, peripheral vascular disease or conditions aggravated by extreme cold. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 587-521-3595.