

## Home Instruction for Common Heat Methods

There are different ways to apply heat. Try several methods to find what your child likes best.

### Cautions:

1. Never apply heat for more than 20 minutes. It can cause a burn.
2. Do not use on areas with poor *blood flow* (like hands or feet that are always cold) or with decreased *sensation* (areas that are numb or tingling). Avoid areas where skin is fragile or broken.
3. Use mild heat—just above skin temperature.
4. Avoid heat methods that are too heavy. If it weighs too much it can cause pain.
5. Do not use both heat and liniment or ointment at the same time it can cause a burn

Methods	Description	Special Concerns
Hot baths and showers	Baths and showers are easy and help many joints at the same time. They can relieve morning stiffness, some exercises can be done in the tub or shower, and showers can provide a massage.	Avoid falls by installing safety straps, grab bars, or rubber bath mat. If needed, use tub or shower seat. Turn cold water on first and off last to avoid burns.
Heating pad or electric heat	Dry heat for small areas.	Child should not lay on pad or go to sleep with pad on. Avoid contact with anything wet. Use low setting. Supervise use.
Electric moist heating pad	Moist heat for small area.	Make sure cover is not damaged. Use low setting. Child should not lay on it or go to sleep with it on. Supervise use.
Hot water bottle	Moist heat for small area.	A hot water bottle can be heavy. It cools off quickly. Use care when filling.

Hot compresses  
or hot pack

Moist towels wrung out. Can be  
heated in microwave oven.  
Commercial packs also available.

Can be hard to wring if hands or wrists are  
painful. Be careful when using to avoid burns.  
Wrap in a dry towel before putting on skin.  
Temperature is hard to control. May be heavy.

Elastic glove

Gloves retain heat, support the joint,  
and help with swelling and stiffness.  
Good to use at night.

Sleeping bag,  
electric blanket

Dry heat, can help with morning  
stiffness

The child should not lay on top of the electric  
blanket. Use low setting only.