HYPERTHERMIA BATH

What is it and when is it indicated?
The root word “hyper” means “high” or “above”, while the root word “thermia” means “temperature”. The premise of the hyperthermia treatment is to raise your body temperature above its normal level via an immersion bath, inducing a fever.

Why and how does the treatment work?
Experiencing fever is part of our body’s natural defense mechanism. An induced, controlled fever seems to enhance our body’s ability to fend off infections, while increased body temperature is also directly lethal to many heat-sensitive viruses and bacteria. Immunologically, whole body hyperthermia has been demonstrated to increase Natural Killer Cell activity and the ratios of T-helper cells to T-suppressor cells have been shown to increase with repeated hyperthermia treatments. All this means the immune system is activated in this high temperature situation.

Physiologically, with the external application of heat, heat conservation mechanisms are reversed while heat dissipation mechanisms are activated, such that with the flushing of the skin via dilation of surface blood vessels, sweating begins, releasing “toxins” to the surface of the body through the skin’s pores (the skin is one of the major detoxification organs of the human body). Water is obviously useful in the removal of these toxins. The method of hyperthermic fever induction that is safest and uses water is called an immersion bath. The bath water temperature is monitored for the duration of the treatment and can be adjusted easily with the addition of, or draining of water as necessary.

The effects from the bath act in a complex, non-specific manner on the physiological functions of the body including the central nervous system, the autonomic nervous system, the musculoskeletal system, pulmonary and kidney dynamics, the hormone system, the immune system, etc. The result for the body, especially in conjunction with other healthy diet and lifestyle modifications, results in the body’s improved capacity, adaptation and self-healing potential while having normalizing effects on the body’s systems and rhythms.

Who should not undergo this treatment?
Contraindications to hyperthermia are serious illness or decreased vitality (elderly, very young children), pre-existing high fever, open wounds or active bleeding, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, acute high blood pressure, pregnancy or possible pregnancy, breast feeding, heart disease, arrhythmia, other cardiac diseases with cardiac deficiency, pulmonary deficiency, respiratory insufficiency, anemia, lupus and anxiety states.

PROCEDURE
See the Hyperthermic Bath handout