

Thermal Cures and Covid-19

Press release from the French National Academy of Medicine

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The thermal cure is a medical therapy that combines hydrothermal care, rehabilitation and patient education. In France, it takes care of annually more than half a million patients with chronic conditions (musculoskeletal, neurological, respiratory, skin, vascular, metabolic, psychosomatic, pediatric, digestive, urinary, genital, etc.), mostly elderly people often suffering from multiple disorders.

In the current context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the risks should not be underestimated. Hydrothermal care brings patients and professionals together in a warm and humid environment favorable to the survival and transmission of microorganisms through the respiratory tract as well as through direct or indirect contact.

The quality of natural mineral waters and their gases is protected by their origin, their capture methods and their protective perimeters. In addition, thermal medicine can contribute to the management of certain after-effects of Covid-19 by a support to more efficient ventilatory mechanics and motor functions and by a relief of the stress following a prolonged stay in an intensive care unit.

In light of these considerations, the National Academy of Medicine recommends:

- A screening test for Covid-19 with RT-PCR in any patient within the five days preceding the start of the spa treatment and the daily temperature reading upon entering the spa;
- The implementation and compliance with the barrier measures (physical distance, wearing a mask, hand hygiene) by everyone present, and in all parts of the establishment;
- Heating the thermal sludge used in some treatment programs at 70°C for 30 minutes to inactivate SARS-CoV-2 before each use;
- For treatments in the collective pool, subject to the rules of public swimming pools, the allocation to each patient of a free area of 2 m² in the pool and an overall free area of 4 m² including the edges of the pool;
- Cleaning and disinfection, according to a plan established in accordance with the recommendations in force, daily for the common areas hosting the patients, and after each use for the care areas and treatment stations;
- The daily supply by the establishment of individual linen, masks and disposable overshoes in the therapeutic areas;
- An air treatment that ensures sufficient renewal to avoid any risk of aerosol contamination;
- The suspension of all collective care in a fogging atmosphere until the end of the Covid-19 epidemic;

- The control by the ARS (Regional Health Authority) of the strict application of these recommendations prior to the authorization to resume operation”s” à ajouter, and the establishment of a Covid-19 cell in each station, in connection with the ARS directorate responsible for health safety.

These recommendations may be modified according to the evolution of knowledge and the health conditions.