

Castor Oil Pack

Though we mainly know it as one of Edgar Cayce's most famous remedies, castor oil has a long history of traditional medical use dating back to ancient Egypt. Derived from the castor bean, the oil was traditionally used internally as a laxative. However, now it is primarily used externally due to its potential toxicity.

A castor oil pack is placed on the skin to increase circulation and to promote elimination and healing of the tissues and organs underneath the skin. It is used to stimulate the liver, relieve pain, increase lymphatic circulation, reduce inflammation, and improve digestion.

Castor oil packs are a traditional holistic treatment for a range of conditions, such as: cholecystitis (inflammation of the gall bladder), poor eliminations, epilepsy, various liver conditions such as cirrhosis and torpid liver, scleroderma, headaches, appendicitis, arthritis, incoordination between assimilations and eliminations, colitis, intestinal disorders such as stricture and colon impaction, incoordination between nervous systems, neuritis, and toxemia.

Castor oil packs are made by soaking a piece of flannel in castor oil and placing it on the skin. The flannel is covered with a sheet of plastic, and then a hot water bottle is placed over the plastic to heat the pack.

A castor oil pack can be placed on the following body regions:

The right side of the abdomen to stimulate the liver; inflamed and swollen joints, bursitis, and muscle strains; the abdomen to relieve constipation and other digestive disorders; the lower abdomen in cases of menstrual irregularities and uterine and ovarian cysts.

Safety precautions: Castor oil should not be taken internally. It should not be applied to broken skin, or used during pregnancy, breastfeeding, or during menstrual flow.

Materials Needed:

- **Castor oil** - preferably cold-pressed or expeller-pressed, about 16 - 32 oz.
- **Flannel cloth** - wool flannel is preferred, although cotton may be substituted in the case of wool allergy
- **Castor Oil Pack Holder** - or plastic wrap or plastic sheet, plus bath towel or large elastic bandage, and a few safety pins
- **Electric heating pad** - or other heating element, optional

Instructions for Use

If you like, you may boil or launder the flannel to remove any impurities which may remain in the fabric. Fold the cloth into three or four thicknesses, creating a pad of a size adequate to cover the area to be treated.

If you do not have a Castor Oil Pack Holder, you can improvise with using plastic wrap and a towel (or other binding). If using plastic wrap, cut a somewhat larger piece than the folded flannel. A plastic garbage bag normally works fairly well, but it is best to avoid using plastic grocery bags, as they are usually printed with the store name and that ink usually dissolves and spreads when exposed to castor oil.

Place the cloth on top of the Pack Holder or plastic wrap and saturate it with castor oil. The cloth should be wet but not dripping. The saturated cloth should then be placed directly on the skin with the plastic wrap on top of it. If you are applying the pack to your back, you may find it easier to lay the plastic on the bed, put the flannel on top of it, and roll over onto the flannel in such a way as to position it at the area that needs to be treated.

Then, if indicated, a heating pad is placed over top the plastic wrap on either a low or medium setting, or more if it is comfortable. The heat will promote absorption, increase circulation, and help the body to relax. This is generally left in place for approximately one to two hours. Heat should not be used in conditions where it is normally contraindicated, as in the treatment of appendicitis, diabetic neuropathy, or over the abdomen during pregnancy.

An alternative is to apply the pack without heat, using the Pack Holder or a towel wrapped around the body (with safety pins to hold it in place). This can be left on overnight or for an entire 24 hour period.

Make sure that your plastic covers the entire exterior of the flannel pack, as castor oil is likely to stain any fabric it touches!

Afterward the skin can be cleansed, if desired, with a solution containing a teaspoon of baking soda per pint of water. The flannel pack may be used repeatedly and may be kept in a plastic container between usages, although this is not usually necessary as castor oil is very resistant to spoilage. The flannel pack should be replaced periodically - especially when it appears soiled, as may happen when the area being treated is particularly toxic.

Castor oil packs are one of those rare remedies that cannot be used too much; generally, with external applications of castor oil, "more is better." While the ARE Clinic normally recommends that the minimum use be for an hour each day - for three consecutive days in a week - this frequency and duration may often be exceeded in order to bring better and faster relief.

If it is known that there is a critically high degree of toxicity in the body, or a significant difficulty in eliminating toxins (such as with kidney failure), then it is best if the packs are used on alternating days for the first week. After that, usually the packs may be used on consecutive days from that point on.

Castor oil pack treatments should always be gentle and with no real side effects. The most common side effect is a rash that may occur at the site of the pack. This typically only occurs during the first few applications of the pack, and may be relieved by using the baking soda wash. Rashes and other reactions are rare, and if they occur they usually indicate that the elimination of toxins through the system are not good, and perhaps the pack should be used on alternate days for the first week of use.

Sometimes an oral dose of extra virgin olive oil - a teaspoon or two - is indicated after every third treatment. Typically this is for relieving conditions of the gall bladder, liver, and colon.

Cleaning the Pack

If you absolutely must clean the pack, begin by soaking the pack in a solution of baking soda and hot water, using four ounces of soda to two quarts of water. After soaking the pack for at least 20 minutes, wring it out thoroughly and allow it to air dry.