

## *Castor Oil*

### *What is Castor Oil?*

Castor oil has a long history of traditional medical use dating back to ancient Egypt. Castor oil is derived from the castor bean (*Ricinus communis*). Although it was once taken orally as a laxative, it's now known to be toxic and is used only externally over unbroken skin. It should only be used after consulting a healthcare professional.

### *What is a Castor Oil Pack?*

A castor oil pack involves using a cloth soaked in castor oil, which is placed on the skin. Some alternative practitioners use it to enhance circulation and promote the healing of the tissues and organs underneath the skin. Alternative practitioners also use it to improve liver function, relieve pain, reduce inflammation, and improve digestion.

### *How is a Castor Oil Pack Made?*

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 plastic sheet, and 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. Alternative practitioners sometimes recommend castor oil packs as part of a liver detox program.
- 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*

Castor oil should not be taken internally. It should not be applied to broken skin. It should not be used during pregnancy, breastfeeding, or menstruation.

## *Materials*

- Three layers of un-dyed wool or cotton flannel large enough to cover the affected area
- Castor oil
- Plastic wrap cut one to two inches larger than the flannel (can be cut from a plastic bag)
- Hot water bottle
- Container with lid
- Old clothes and sheets. Castor oil will stain clothing and bedding.

## *Method*

1. Place the flannel in the container. Soak it in castor oil so that it is saturated, but not dripping.
2. Place the pack over the affected body part.
3. Cover with plastic.
4. Place the hot water bottle over the pack. Leave it on for 45-60 minutes.  
Rest while the pack is in place.
5. After removing the pack, cleanse the area with a dilute solution of water and baking soda.
6. Store the pack in the covered container in the refrigerator.  
Each pack may be reused up to 25-30 times.

