

## Castor Oil Pack

Castor oil is the oil extracted from the castor bean plant. Castor oil is widely known as a cathartic (laxative) when used internally. However, little is ever mentioned about its healing properties when it is used externally. The use of castor oil is found in medical references dating back to ancient civilizations. In the Ebers papyrus (1500 B.C.) castor oil was used topically (on the outside of the body; applied to the skin) for many conditions.

Most of our present information about the therapeutic use of topical applications of castor oil comes from the files of Edgar Cayce. In his psychic discourses, Cayce suggests the topical use of castor oil as a Castor Oil Pack for more than fifty different conditions of illness in the human body. Among the documented cases where Castor Oil Packs were used successfully were condition of abscess, bursitis, constipation, appendicitis, whip lash, muscle sprains, low back pain, abrasions and lacerations, fibroid tumors, and for arthritic conditions.

While it is not known exactly how castor oil works, research shows that castor oil has a profound influence upon the lymphatic system (useful for detoxification) and on the autonomic nervous system.

We are led, then, to the conclusion that the castor oil, when absorbed, directs its activities in some manner to the tissues it contacts in an exquisitely minute relationship and stimulates those tissues afflicted toward a healthier function. It becomes difficult to deviate far from a concept that the cleansing or purifying of the individual cells affected is brought about through the medium of the lymphatic system as related – at least in part – to the autonomic nerve supply to the area.

As castor oil is absorbed through the skin, it moves through the lymphatic channels stimulating lymphatic drainage and the natural healing ability of the body to break up any congestion present. Since the pain and swelling from injury is due, in great part, to the interruption of lymph drainage in the affected area resulting in an accumulation of fluid, this action of castor oil on the lymphatics is what makes it a valuable therapeutic tool for first aid.

Indication for Castor Oil Pack use include detoxification, multiple chemical sensitivity, liver cleanings, gall bladder inflammation, arthritis, chest colds, colitis, and other intestinal disorders, infections, pelvic problems, and other conditions. The emollient properties of castor oil make it excellent for soothing chapped lips and dry or irritated skin.

*NOTE: Use only Organic Castor Oil by Edgar Cayce. This is the PUREST castor oil and does not contain harmful solvents and chemical found in drugstore and other sources of castor oil.*

# Castor Oil Pack Directions

## Supplies for Castor Oil Pack

Flannel or wool cloth

Heating pad

Plastic wrap

Castor Oil

## Preparation of Castor Oil Packs

1. Fold the flannel or wool cloth into 2-4 thicknesses and a suitable size to cover recommend body area.
2. Either soak the pack in preheated castor oil or saturate the cloth with castor oi and heat the castor oil pack in the oven on a cookie sheet at a low temperature. Don't use your microwave oven as you can too easily scorch the oil and pack. You want the pack very warm but not hot enough to burn your skin.
3. Apply pack to the entire abdomen, especially cover the right side over the liver.
4. Place sheet of plastic over pack. This is to prevent oil from ruining your clothing and linen.
5. Place heating pad on top of sheet of plastic and turn heating pad to medium or high if tolerable.
6. Treatment should continue for 30-45 minutes.
7. To complete treatment, remove the castor oil pack and clean your skin with a solution of baking soda (1 teaspoon baking soda to 1 pint of water).
8. The pack can be stored in the refrigerator in a container. It can be reused 20-25 times after which it should be washed.

Spread castor oil directly on affected area. Cover with plastic wrap or a plastic bag. This may be covered with a towel or t-shirt.

*Note: If skin is sensitive to plastic, use a paper towel between skin and plastic wrap.*

## **CASTOR OIL: AN ESSENTIAL FOR HEALTH**

*By Jeoff Drobot, NMD and Dickson Thom, DDS, ND  
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Castor bean seeds (*Ricinus communis*) are thought to date back to 4,000 years ago and they have surfaced in historical documents for millenniums. They were even discovered in Egyptian tombs (1). The plant has been called various names by different cultures. For example, the ancient Greeks called it Kiki and the Romans referred to it as the Palma Christi (due to its resemblance to the palm of a hand).

The first medicinal prescription of castor oil may have been in pre-Christian times. The Egyptian physicians instructed to chew the seeds of the plant with beer to relieve constipation (2) while the Aztecs used the oil externally to treat skin lesions and hemorrhoids (3). The Chinese used it to induce childbirth and expel the placenta.

Considering these specific historical uses, how did using this ancient oil topically in the form of a castor oil pack become part of the BTG's? In fact, it never would have without the work of Edgar Cayce – an ordinary man with an extraordinary gift.

Edgar Cayce, a native of Kentucky with a ninth grade education, had the ability to enter into a hypnotic state and accurately diagnose a wide range of diseases for his clients. These hypnotic readings were very detailed and used precise medical terminology. Even more interesting was that Cayce had no medical ability when not in the trance.

Cayce is considered the most talented 20<sup>th</sup> century psychic as well as the “Father of Holistic Medicine” by the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).

Out of the 9,000 health related readings, Cayce suggested using castor oil 545 times as the treatment for a variety of ailments (4).

Cayce listed over 30 physiologic functions of castor oil, including:

- Increasing eliminations, lymphatic circulation, relaxation
- Stimulating the liver, gall bladder, lacteal duct circulation, and cecum
- Dissolving and removing adhesions, lesions, and gallstones
- Relieving pain
- Reducing flatulence, inflammation, nausea, swelling
- Improving intestinal assimilation
- Coordinating liver-kidney function

How castor oil works is still a mystery.

Scientifically, castor oil has demonstrated immune stimulating properties. The oil may also have antiviral properties. The ricin, a substance in the bean, has been shown to kill the HIV virus in test-tube trials. Researchers at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center found that the ricin attacks and destroys both the virus as well as the cells in which it resides (3).

Interestingly, in 1913, Douglas W. Montgomery, MD reported his belief that castor oil acts on the ascending colon (3) and he also found the oil indispensable when treating diseases of the skin. Montgomery felt that toxins generated in the haustra of the colon caused many of these skin conditions. He regarded this area as a favorable location for anaerobic proteolytic bacteria (3). Naturopathically, this makes sense considering the important relation the digestive tract has with the skin.

Through its influence on the parasympathetic nervous system, or the “rest and digest” system, castor oil may produce a sedative state in the body. Individuals have reported that the castor oil pack relaxes them and helps them sleep when used before bed. One author suggests that this may be the result of placing the packs over the solar plexus, the largest accumulation of autonomic nerve cells in the lower body (3). Considering the stress of modern living, this could prove to be incredibly beneficial.

Increasing the flow of lymph is definitely beneficial to detoxifying the body (see Lymphatic Massage). The lymph is the only fluid that maintains contact with every cell in the human body. It is the vehicle that allows the wastes accumulating around the cells to be removed. The oil is thought to act on the lymphatic system and increase the quantity of lymph, as well as contracting the lymphatic vessels. This increase in lymphatic flow is likely the result of the oil stimulating the parasympathetic nerves that innervate the lymphatic vessels. The increase in the quantity of lymph may result from hepatic stimulation, as the liver produces one-third to one-half of the lymph in the human body (3).

Castor oil packs have been scientifically proven to increase lymphocyte production and activity of T-cell lymphocytes, a type of white blood cell (1). Increasing lymphocyte ‘traffic’ throughout the body initiates and perpetuates the immune response (1). This equates to the body producing more antibodies as well as killing viruses, fungi, bacteria, and cancer cells. This increase in T-cells peaks at seven hours after the treatment and declines to normal within 24 hours (exemplifying the importance of daily use).

The skin, being the primary barrier in the body, has an active role in immune functioning. T-lymphocytes reside in the skin’s epidermis and dermis (1). Castor oil may trigger the T-cells in the skin to activate a general immune system reaction throughout the lymphatics. The messengers

for this systemic reaction may be prostaglandins. The body's production of prostaglandins may be stimulated by the chemical similarity of the castor oil to immune stimulating prostaglandins.

If indeed castor oil did replicate prostaglandins, many of the oil's effects, controlling inflammation, stimulating smooth muscle, contracting vasculature, and stimulating the B and T lymphocytes, may be explained. Castor oil has been shown to produce prostanoids, which are precursors to prostaglandins (1). A further discussion of prostaglandins can be found in the flax/evening primrose section of this guide.

Another possible explanation for the increased lymphocyte count may involve a series of aggregated lymphatic nodules known as Peyer's patches, which vary in length from two to ten centimeters (3). Twenty to thirty of these patches exist with the largest and greatest concentration residing in the ileum. Each patch is a group of aggregated lymphatic nodules encapsulated in mucous membrane. They are most easily observed in younger individuals and may disappear with age.

They are considered to be important to the development of the immune system in children (see probiotics discussion).

According to Edgar Cayce, the Peyer's patches produce a substance that facilitates electrical contact between the autonomic and the cerebrospinal nervous system when it reaches those areas via the bloodstream. His readings suggested that the patches secrete substances that balance the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

Cayce further believed that the health of the entire nervous system is, to an extent, maintained through the substances produced by the Peyer's patches when they are in good health. Although the Peyer's patches were discovered in 1677, it is only recently that medical science has begun to recognize them as a constituents of the body's immune system.

In his last reading in 1944, Cayce stated, "When there is over exercise physically, or especially the mental forces as of worry or anxiety, to be sure it calls on the necessity of castor oil treatment."

In 63% of Cayce's readings the liver was the target organ for a castor oil pack and in 90% of his readings he suggested the pack be positioned to include the liver. The prescription of treatment was most commonly one hour three times a week over a cycle of three weeks with a one week break.

This was thought to evoke the body into developing its own functioning while adding additional tonification. However, with the considerable toxicity of today's world, daily use is necessary and the most efficacious method is to cover the entire abdomen with cotton flannel. This will maximize the oil's positive healing influence on all the digestive organs.

A double-blind study, described by Harvey Grady, in a report entitled, "Immunomodulation through Castor Oil Packs" published in the Journal of Naturopathic Medicine, examined lymphocyte values of 36 healthy subjects before and after topical castor oil application. This study identified castor oil as an anti-toxin, and as having impact on the lymphatic system, enhancing immunological function.

The study found that castor oil pack therapy, of minimal two-hour duration, produced an increase in the number of T-11 cells within a 24-hour period following treatment, with a concomitant increase in the number of total lymphocytes. This T-11 cell increase represents a general boost in the body's specific defense status, since lymphocytes actively defend the health of the body by forming antibodies against pathogens and their toxins. T-cells identify and kill viruses, fungi, bacteria, and cancer cells.

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