



Castor Oil for External Use

Castor oil has been used successfully as an internal agent to induce labor and treat constipation, the side effects of this include cramping painful diarrhea. This article is about the topical uses of castor oil.

Chronic pain:

You may have heard about the benefits of topical capsaicin for arthritis and chronic pain. This works by stimulating nerve endings thereby blocking pain. Castor oil also exerts this *counter-irritant* effect without the associated burning. This same effect also increases the flow of blood and immune cells to the local area, making castor oil effective in breaking down scar tissue and some cysts.

Detoxification:

Castor oil packs are commonly used by naturopathic physicians to promote detoxification and treat constipation. When castor oil is applied topically to the abdomen either directly onto the skin or as a pack (flannel soaked in oil) it will stimulate the activity of the liver and the intestines.

Psoriasis and Eczema:

For dry skin, castor oil acts as a skin softening emollient. For some, castor oil is the best emollient out there, for others it acts as a skin irritant. Before slathering your sores in castor oil, be sure to try a test patch to check for irritation.

Cautions:

Castor oil can irritate skin - test a small area first

Castor oil stains - be sure to wear an old T shirt or use old sheets when using castor oil packs

Do not take castor oil internally unless instructed by your physician.

Some patients may detox rapidly with the use of castor oil abdominally, and their symptoms need to be assessed and tracked by a naturopathic doctor.



Castor Oil Pack/Abdominal Application Instructions:

Supplies:

- Organic castor oil
- Old T-shirt
- Heat source (otherwise application can be left overnight)
- 20-30 minutes for the pack
- Small flannel square (preferably organic and undyed)

Pack instructions:

Soak the flannel in castor oil. The flannel should be well saturated but not dripping. Apply to the abdomen over the area of the liver - on your right over the lower 1/3 of your ribs and the surrounding area. Cover area with an old T-Shirt or towel (remember, castor oil stains). Apply heat over the area in the form of a hot water bottle, heating pad, or rice pack. Relax in a reclined position for 20-30 minutes.

Abdominal Application Instructions:

Either wear an old T-shirt or pair of pajamas or put old sheets on your bed (castor oil stains). Slather your abdomen focusing on the area of your liver, the lower 1/3 of your ribs to two inches below on your right side. While you are at it, give yourself a nice abdominal massage tracing the course of your large intestine to promote movement. The pattern is as follows: Lower right abdomen, up to the line of your ribs, across to the upper left abdomen, and down to the lower left abdomen. You can also massage in a circular motion in this same direction.

After your abdominal massage, go to bed and sleep. By the morning, the oil will have absorbed into your skin and most likely you will have a bowel movement in the morning.

Remember to test a small patch of skin first, consult with your naturopathic doctor, and remember that some people detox quickly causing unpleasant symptoms. Keep your doctor informed.