

What is Castor Oil?

Castor oil is derived from the seed of the *Ricinus communis* **Ry-Sin-us Kum-Yew-nis** plant. It has large, beautiful palmate leaves hence the name, Palma Christi, or Palm of Christ for its healing abilities.

The Palma Christi has been used therapeutically for centuries in the folk medicine of ancient India, China, Persia, Africa, Greece, Rome, and the Americas. Edgar Cayce, a medical intuitive known as the "sleeping prophet", introduced castor oil packs for the treatment of many conditions. In Cayce's writings, castor oil is presented as a marvelous source of natural remedies. As an external oil pack, it has been used to treat a variety of health conditions such as **arthritis, liver and intestinal disorders, tumors, cysts, and skin conditions**. Taken internally, castor oil is a strong cathartic and is not recommended, as there are ways to relieve constipation that are not as harsh.

Some of the other numerous uses of castor oil include the treatment of **breast cysts, fibroids, ovarian cysts, congestion of abdominal organs, skin conditions, small benign cysts, and adhesions from surgery**. Wherever there is congestion, decreased blood flow and need for healing, castor oil can be an effective treatment option.

How does castor oil work?

Castor oil penetrates deep into the skin thanks to its molecular weight. Research has shown that castor oil has a unique chemical profile rich in **ricinoleic acid**, which is known to exist in nature only in castor oil.

A double-blind study, entitled **Immunomodulation through Castor Oil Packs** published in an issue of 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 a minimal two-hour duration produced an increase in the number of T-11 cells within a 24-hour period following treatment, with a 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.

Castor oil packs improve lymphatic circulation and draw acids and infection out of the body

In addition to strengthening the immune system, castor oil appears to have a balancing effect on the autonomic nervous system, increasing liver activity and improving digestion.

What is a castor oil pack?

The standard pack recommended by Edgar Cayce consists of several layers of unbleached wool flannel, (holds heat better), but cotton flannel is also used with excellent results. Castor oil is soaked on the material and applied to the area in need of healing.

Soak the flannel in the oil to make it well saturated but not dripping. Place the pack over the area to be treated. Place a heat source, a heating pack or hot water bottle, on top of the pack and maintain constant warmth throughout the treatment. Secure this in place with a heavy towel.

Continue treatment for one hour. An alternative to using the pack without a heat source; secure pack with a towel wrapped around your body, secure with safety pins, leave in place overnight. Or wear an old T-shirt over the pack while you sleep. Make sure you wear something that you don't mind getting oil on because the oil will stain.

How do I prevent staining from the oil?

Protect any bedding or clothing from staining since castor oil is highly penetrating. (old heavy bath towel are typically effective). Washing soda (sal soda) may be used during laundering to remove some of the stains on fabric.

How are the packs maintained?

To re-use a pack for multiple treatments, just re-saturate with oil. Packs can be stored in a glass jar for six months to a year as long as it does not become rancid or soiled. Packs should not be shared among persons.

How often do I use the packs as a treatment?

A typical regimen for non-acute conditions is three times a week, every other night for three weeks with the fourth week off. Repeat this for two more cycles, take a week off, and then continue once a week until symptoms subside.

For acute situations, use for 60 minutes nightly for five nights, take two nights off, then repeat the cycle for two weeks or until the condition is resolved.

In either case, individual response will differ depending on the symptoms that are being treated, please consult with your health care provider.

Are there any contraindications to usage?

Do not use the packs during times of heavy bleeding or during pregnancy. Again, consult with your health care provider.

Heat should not be used with diabetic neuropathy or appendicitis. Packs can be used without heat.

On rare occasion a rash can occur at the site. To avoid this you can wash the oil off after your treatment with a weak solution of 1 TBL baking soda to one cup of warm water.