



Castor Oil Pack Recipe

Background

A castor oil pack placed on the skin may be recommended by alternative medicine practitioners to promote healing, reduce inflammation, and improve circulation, especially lymphatic circulation. It has also been found to reduce symptoms of constipation.

Castor oil is derived from the castor bean (*Ricinus communis*). Castor oil has long been used in folk medicine, dating back to ancient Egypt, for several ailments.

Although it was once taken orally as a laxative, it is now known to be toxic and is used only externally over the unbroken skin.

Precautions

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

Castor oil has not been tested for safety in children, people who are pregnant or nursing, or those with medical conditions or who are taking medications. If you are considering the use of castor oil, talk with your primary care provider first.

Materials

- Three layers of undyed wool or cotton flannel large enough to cover the affected area
- Castor oil
- Plastic wrap cut 1 to 2 inches larger than the flannel (can be cut from a plastic bag)
- Hot water bottle (filled with hot water) or a heating pad
- Container with a 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. Prepare the area where you will be using the pack. You will want to be seated or lying on a sheet and wearing old clothes to prevent staining items with the castor oil.
3. Carefully remove the soaked flannel from the container (you may wish to use tongs) and place this "pack" over the affected body part.
4. Cover the pack with plastic or old cloth or towel.
5. Place the hot water bottle over the pack. Leave it on for 45-60 minutes. Rest while the pack is in place.
6. Remove the pack and place it back into the container and close the lid.
7. After removing the pack, cleanse the area with a dilute solution of water and baking soda.
8. Store the pack in the covered container in the refrigerator. Each pack may be reused up to 25-30 times.