

The Miracle of Castor Oil

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Castor oil is a simple cure that really does fix just about everything as well today as it did in it's first recorded use 3000 years ago. It's been working for 3000 years, chances are it's going to keep working.

There are internal uses for castor oil, but I wouldn't necessarily suggest them simply because this isn't a gentle plant - it's a kick in the pants. Castor oil taken internally is a laxative strong enough not only to induce bowel cramping and diarrhea, but even to induce labor contractions in pregnant women. That's a lot of cramping. The reaction is so strong that castor oil is even reputed to have been used by fascist mobs in Italy in the 1920s as a form of intimidation. Essentially these mobs would force feed their victims castor oil and turn them loose to have an agonizing and embarrassing bout of violent diarrhea, which I suppose made the victims then comply with whatever it was the fascist mob wanted in the first place.

While I'm obviously not a fan of internal use in all but the most dire circumstances, topical use of castor oil is a miracle strong enough to balance the drama of internal use. The uses for topical castor oil are threefold:

Digestive and detoxification - castor oil over the liver and abdomen helps to treat constipation, inflammatory bowel, liver congestion, gall bladder disease, bowel adhesions, lymphatic congestion, hepatitis, liver cirrhosis and even infections in pelvic organs such as bladder and vaginal tract.

Skin - when used over other areas of the body castor oil can help with bacterial or fungal skin infections, rashes, acne, boils, abscesses, age spots, sebaceous cysts, warts, preventing stretch marks, ringworm, skin keratosis, swollen lymph nodes and eczema.

Pain - topical castor oil can also be used to relieve pain and inflammation from many causes. This includes uterine cramping and abdominal pain related to the menses, joint pain and inflammation from arthritis, bursitis or tendonitis, muscle and ligament sprains, pain due to fluid retention in extremities, painful lymph nodes, lung inflammation, even pain from appendicitis (although it's still a good policy to get to the ER post haste)

The reason for its dramatic success in so many areas is simply the size of the primary molecule, ricinoleic acid, which comprises about 90% of the oil's volume. Ricinoleic acid is strongly anti-inflammatory and is a small enough molecule to penetrate into the deepest layers of the skin as well as into the lymphatic channels. This penetration and effect is even better if you use heat on the area being treated. The best news is that 8oz of organic castor oil will run between \$5 and \$10 depending on how fancy a store you like to shop in. That 8oz will last most of your natural life because there's really only so much you can use at once.

There are two ways to do this, but here's a general list of what you'll need:

Supplies:

- Cloth - cotton or wool; historically a piece of flannel was used because it's soft and absorbent
- Old T-shirt or sweats
- Plastic wrap (optional)
- Hot water bottle or other heating device, like a heating pad
- Castor oil - I prefer the organic hexane-free variety.

Directions (the classic method):

1. Fold the flannel or wool cloth 2-4 times, so that it is several layers thick and a suitable size to cover your liver, uterus, or area you want to treat. Pour the oil onto flannel until it is moistened but not dripping.
2. Warm the flannel with oil in glass dish in oven or microwave to a comfortable temperature. The pack should be hot, but not hot enough to burn your skin. Lie down placing the flannel directly on your skin over the liver. Cover the pack in plastic wrap so that the oil doesn't stain your clothes or bedding. Use a hot water bottle or heating pad over the pack to help the oil soak into your skin.
3. **Rest.** This is important because it allows the oil to soak in and gives your body some time to work on the area being treated. Generally the pack should be left on for a half hour to an hour.
4. The soaked flannel pack can be stored in the refrigerator, and reused for 20 - 25 applications. Washing the castor oil off your skin after treatment is not necessary as the oil is beneficial for dry, chapped skin. If you would like to remove the oil a solution of baking soda in water (1 tsp. Baking soda to 1 pint water) will work well.

Directions (Amy's slightly lazy method):

1. Before bed, rub castor oil directly onto the skin over your liver – this is the area over your bottom ribs on the right and also your abdomen on the right side below the ribcage. Front and back. Or, if you're using it for fibroids, arthritis or a chest cold then over your uterus, joints, or chest, put it wherever you need it. Put an old T-shirt or sweats on over that. The oil will stain the clothes, so make sure it's something you don't care about.
2. Go to bed. If you're feeling especially ambitious then take a hot water bottle. When you wake up in the morning shower as usual – the heat generated while you were sleeping allows all of the oil to soak in overnight and very rarely do people notice any oil left on their skin when they get up.

The castor oil is actually absorbed into your body and travels through the lymphatic channels, which carry toxins to your liver. The oil helps to clean out and move the lymph more quickly to the liver to allow your liver to process the toxins hanging around in there. Castor oil packs are great to do if you're feeling under the weather or if you have a headache that won't seem to go away. Also if you're doing a detox or to help get rid of menstrual cramps and uterine pain you can do a pack over the area of your uterus. Basically, if you hurt or are inflamed somewhere, then do a castor oil pack. It's a simple rule of thumb.