



# CASTOR OIL

## Transdermal Healing and Beyond: a versatile and effective oil

### Castor Oil: History and Overview

Castor oil has been used from antiquity, its first recorded medicinal use going back to the time of the Ebers papyrus, an ancient Egyptian medical treatise. Castor oil is a viscous, pale yellow vegetable oil pressed from the bean (in truth a seed) of the castor plant, which grows best in wet, tropical climates. Its common name is thought to be derived from the word "castoreum," as the dried perineal glands of the beaver are called, the Latin genus name of the beaver being *castor*. Castoreum was once employed as a perfume base and has now been superseded by the use of castor oil. The bean contains ricin, a highly poisonous cytotoxic protein that is denatured and rendered harmless by the heat of the oil extraction process.

A traditional name for the plant is "Palma Christi" because of its supposed resemblance to the hand of Christ and its widely-reputed healing power. While Castor Oil has a long history of both external and internal use, our license covers only its external use. Herbalist David Hoffmann echoes most practitioners in noting that its effect is too strong to justify its internal use as a cathartic for common constipation or as a means of inducing labour.<sup>1</sup> Topically, it has been used as an external preparation for its wound-healing, anti-inflammatory, detoxifying, immunomodulatory, and skin emollient properties, as well as for gastrointestinal problems like gas, bloating, and constipation. In its typical topical use, castor oil is applied in the form of a pack placed over swollen glands, cysts, and other lumps and growths. It has a particular action on the lymphatic system, where it draws out toxins and poisons. For this reason, practitioner Alan Keith Tillotson recommends placing it over the lymph glands near the shoulders, groin, upper back, and neck, as well as over the abdomen, liver, or kidneys.<sup>2</sup> For all its age-old effectiveness, however, castor oil's precise mechanisms of action have not been fully explained by science,<sup>3</sup> although there is an excellent referenced overview of the research on its topical uses.<sup>4</sup>

### Topical Castor Oil and the Immune System

A double-blind study conducted in 1998 on 36 healthy subjects before and after the application of castor oil packs abdominally for two hours daily, as they rested in bed, found that castor oil produced a "significant" temporary increase in the number of T11 antigens over a seven-hour period following treatment, with a return to normal levels after 24 hours. T11 antigens have been found to correlate with an upsurge in the body's specific defence mechanism.<sup>5</sup> Speculation is that this is how the castor oil affects the T-lymphocytes in the epidermis and upper dermis layers and that they in turn play their role in influencing the general immune system. As well, a topical application of castor oil may provoke a stimulation of prostaglandins, which also affect the immune system.<sup>6</sup>

## Who it is for

- Women with hormonal issues like PCOS, PMS, infertility, uterine fibroids or ovarian cysts
- Those looking for general detox from toxins to optimize liver function
- Those with swollen glands, cysts, and other lumps and growths
- Anybody with gastrointestinal problems like gas, bloating, and constipation

## How it helps

- Draws out poisons and toxins from the lymphatic system
- Relaxes muscles under the skin and is especially therapeutic for body's hollow organs, including the uterus, fallopian tubes, the blood and lymph vessels, gall bladder, and bowels
- Relieves cysts and enhances blood circulation in the pelvic area
- Good for the liver

Contact us today for more info on this product.

Tel : 1.866.562.9131 | [info@stfrancisherbfarm.com](mailto:info@stfrancisherbfarm.com) | [www.stfrancisherbfarm.com](http://www.stfrancisherbfarm.com)



# CASTOR OIL

In another study, 17 participants had castor oil packs applied to the liver area for 1.5 hours per day over the course of two five day periods spanning two weeks. The result was a normalization of total lymphocyte counts, with two of the participants also experiencing normalization of liver enzymes and cholesterol levels.<sup>7</sup>

## Topical Castor Oil and Pain Reduction

A series of experiments conducted on mice and guinea pigs to investigate the antinociceptive (i.e. pain-reducing) and anti-inflammatory properties of castor oil in comparison with capsaicin found castor oil as effective as the latter, but without the disadvantage of skin irritation. Like capsaicin, ricinoleic acid depletes substance P in instances of neurogenic inflammation. This makes it useful for neuropathic skin disorders like post herpetic neuralgia and diabetic neuropathy.<sup>8,9,10</sup>

## Topical Castor Oil and Constipation

A research study conducted with the elderly who had constipation problems found that castor oil packs, while not influencing the number of bowel movements or volume of feces, mitigated the symptoms of constipation, including straining during defecation and consistency of feces.<sup>11</sup>

## Composition and Pharmacology

Castor oil contains fatty acid glycerides of linoleic, oleic, dihydrostearic, and stearic acids. Ricinoleic acid accounts for 80-90% of the total fatty acid glyceride content and gives the oil its cathartic properties when used orally.<sup>12,13</sup>

## Ayurvedic Tradition

In Ayurvedic medicine, castor oil is considered the king of medicines and is intended for the cure of vata and arthritic diseases, especially when the latter manifest themselves in pain, swelling, and deformations of the joints and bones. Besides these arthritic diseases, it is used externally for lumps, warts, fungal infections of the skin and nails, and conditions like eczema and psoriasis. In Ayurveda, it is used as well topically on the eye to treat styes, conjunctivitis, and foreign objects in the eyes.<sup>14</sup>

## Antimicrobial Properties

An in vitro study on the use of castor oil as the component of a toothpaste in solutions of 2, 5, and 10% found that it exhibited antibacterial action in varying degrees against *Streptococcus mutans*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, and *Enterococcus faecalis*. At 10% concentration, this castor oil solution demonstrated antimicrobial activity comparable to commercial toothpastes. In another study, a castor oil solution showed effectiveness comparable to an alkaline peroxide solution for the removal of biofilm in the cleaning of dentures.<sup>16</sup>

## References:

- <sup>1</sup> David Hoffmann, *Medical Herbalism*, Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2003, p. 266.
- <sup>2</sup> Alan Keith Tillotson, *The One Earth Herbal Sourcebook*, New York: Kensington Publishers; 2001, p. 116.
- <sup>3</sup> Todd A. Born, ND, "Topical Use of Castor Oil," accessed online at: <http://ndnr.com/dermatology/topical-use-of-castor-oil/>
- <sup>4</sup> Deborah A. Kennedy and Dana Keaton, "Evidence for the Topical Application of Castor Oil," *International Journal of Naturopathic Medicine* 2012; 5(1).
- <sup>5</sup> RE Schmidt et al, "T11/CD2 activation of cloned human natural killer cells results in increased conjugate formation and exocytosis of cytolytic granules," *Journal of Immunology* 1988 February; 140(3): 991-1002.
- <sup>6</sup> Harvey Grady, "Immunomodulation through castor oil packs," *Journal of Naturopathic Medicine* 1997; 7(1): 84-9.
- <sup>7</sup> D Keaton and D Myatt, "Effects of castor oil on lymphocytes subsets," presented at: AANP Conference; September 2-6, 1992; The Buttes, Tempe, Arizona
- <sup>8</sup> C Vieira et al, "Effect of ricinoleic acid in acute and subchronic experimental models of inflammation," *Mediators of Inflammation* 2000; 9: 223-8.
- <sup>9</sup> C Vieira et al, "Antinociceptive activity of ricinoleic acid, a capsaicin-like compound devoid of pungent properties," *European Journal of Pharmacology* 2000; 407: 109-16.



NPN: 80049771

Contact us today for more info on this product.  
Tel : 1.866.562.9131 | [info@stfrancisherbfarm.com](mailto:info@stfrancisherbfarm.com) | [www.stfrancisherbfarm.com](http://www.stfrancisherbfarm.com)



# CASTOR OIL

## A Note on the Oral Use of Castor Oil

A randomized, double-blind, comparative clinical study examined the effectiveness of castor oil administered in capsule form to patients with knee osteoarthritis and compared it with diclofenac sodium. The conclusion was that castor oil was just as effective as the diclofenac sodium, but without the latter's adverse effects.<sup>17</sup>

## Active Ingredients:

Fresh, expeller-pressed, cultivated, hexane free, Certified Organic Castor Oil (*Ricinus communis* Linnaeus, bean).

## Contains no:

egg, wheat, soy, artificial preservatives, artificial colours, artificial sweeteners.

## Dose

Apply 60 ml of oil topically to affected area as needed. Apply heat if desired. For external use only. Avoid contact with eyes. If contact occurs, rinse thoroughly with water.

## Health Canada Approved Use Claims

Used in traditional herbal medicine to help remove common warts and for skin itching.

## Cautions and Warnings

Consult a health care practitioner before use if pregnant. Consult a health care practitioner if symptoms worsen or persist.

## Contraindications

Do not use: on irritated or reddened skin or any area that is infected; on moles, birthmarks, warts with hair growing from them, genital warts, or warts on the face or mucous membranes. Do not use if you have diabetes or poor blood circulation.

## Known Adverse Reactions

Hypersensitivity has been known to occur, in which case, discontinue use.

## Quality Summary

Our products are all third party tested to ensure the absence of pesticides, microbes, and heavy metals and to confirm purity and stability.

## References:

<sup>10</sup> C Vieira et al, "Pro- and anti-inflammatory actions of ricinoleic acid: similarities and differences with capsaicin," *Naunyn Schmiedeberg's Archives of Pharmacology* 2001; 364: 87-95.

<sup>11</sup> GG Arslan and I Eser, "An examination of the effect of castor oil packs on constipation in the elderly," *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice* 2011 February; 17(1): 58-62.

<sup>12</sup> Ikhlas A Khan and Ehab A Abourashed, *Leung's Encyclopedia of Common Natural Ingredients Used in Food, Drugs, and Cosmetics*, Third Edition, Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2010; pp. 154-156.

<sup>13</sup> T.S. Gaginella and SF Phillips, "Ricinoleic acid: current view of an ancient oil," *American Journal of Digestive Diseases* 1975 December; 20(12): 1171-7.

<sup>14</sup> Sebastian Pole, *Ayurvedic Medicine: The Principles of Traditional Practice*, Philadelphia: Churchill Livingstone, 2006, pp. 153-154.

<sup>15</sup> Vanessa Maria Fagundes Leite et al, "in Vitro Antimicrobial Activity of an Experimental Dentifrice Based on *Ricinus Communis*," *Brazilian Dental Journal* 2014; 25(3): 191-196.

<sup>16</sup> Ingrid Machado de Andrade et al, "Trial of an Experimental Castor Oil Solution for Cleaning Dentures," *Brazilian Dental Journal* 2014; 25(1): 43-47.

<sup>17</sup> B Medhi et al, "Comparative clinical trial of castor oil and diclofenac sodium in patients with osteoarthritis," *Phytotherapy Research* 2009 October; 23(10): 1469-73.



NPN: 80049771

Contact us today for more info on this product.

Tel : 1.866.562.9131 | info@stfrancisherbfarm.com | www.stfrancisherbfarm.com



# CASTOR OIL

## ADDENDUM ON CASTOR OIL PACKS

### What is a Castor Oil Pack?

Castor oil is applied to the skin by means of a hot pack. The first step in making a pack is to soak a piece of cloth in castor oil. Next, the oil-saturated cloth is placed on the skin and covered with a sheet of plastic. Then a hot water bottle is positioned on the sheet of plastic to provide a source of heat.

### What You'll Need by Way of Materials

- Castor oil
- A piece of undyed wool or cotton flannel that's big enough to cover the relevant skin area in three layers
- A piece of plastic (even a plastic bag will suffice) that's one or two inches larger than the area covered by the three layers of cloth
- Hot water bottle
- A container with a lid that's large enough to hold the oil-soaked layers of cloth
- An old set of clothes and bed sheets that you don't mind getting stained

### Assembling the Pack

1. Take the cloth that you've prepared and place it in the container.
2. Saturate the cloth with castor oil, but not to the point where it's dripping wet.
3. Place the oil-soaked cloth over the part of the body that's being treated in a triple fold.
4. Cover the cloth with your piece of plastic.
5. Prepare the hot water bottle and place it over the plastic sheet.
6. Leave the hot water bottle in place over the pack for 45-60 minutes. During this time you can rest and relax while your body absorbs the soothing goodness of the pack.
7. After that you can remove the pack and clean the affected area with a solution of water and baking soda (in a ratio of 3 tablespoons of baking soda to 1 quart of water).
8. Then place the pack back in the covered container (or a baggie).
9. Store the container (or baggie) in your fridge until the next time you need to apply the pack. When you're ready to use the pack again, take it out of the fridge first for a couple of hours to bring it to room temperature.

### How Frequently You Should Use the Pack

If you have a specific health problem or for purposes of detoxification, you should use a castor oil pack once a day anywhere between three and seven days a week. An individual pack can be re-used as many as 25-30 times.

Contact us today for more info on this product.

Tel : 1.866.562.9131 | [info@stfrancisherbfarm.com](mailto:info@stfrancisherbfarm.com) | [www.stfrancisherbfarm.com](http://www.stfrancisherbfarm.com)