



Healing with Castor Oil Packs

Castor oil is derived from the bean of the Ricinus communis or Palma Christi plant (palm of christ). The Palma Christi has been used therapeutically for centuries in folk medicine of ancient India, China, Persia, Africa, Greece, Rome, and the Americas. It has large, beautiful palmate leaves hence the name, Palma Christi.

Edgar Cayce, a medical intuitive known as the “sleeping prophet”, introduced castor oil packs for the treatment of many conditions.

Some of the 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, scar tissue, decreased blood flow and need for healing, castor oil can be an effective treatment option.

How does castor oil work?

Research has shown castor oil has a unique chemical profile rich in ricinoleic acid which is found only in the castor bean from which the oil is extracted. Double blind studies conducted by the Association for Research and Enlightenment, Inc. demonstrated an increase in lymphocyte production and the level of activity of T-cell lymphocytes in the group that used castor oil packs. T-cell lymphocytes originate from bone marrow and the thymus gland and identify and kill invaders such as virus, bacteria, and fungi.

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. Tumors, fibroids and cysts can be shrunken and eliminated by re-absorption.

What is a castor oil pack?

The standard pack recommended by Edgar Cayce consists of several layers of white 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.

How is a castor oil pack used?

Warm the castor oil to skin temperature in a non-metallic pot. Soak the flannel in the oil to make it well saturated but not dripping. Place the pack over the area to be treated, and cover the pack with plastic food wrap. Place a heat source, a heating pack or hot water bottle, on top of the pack to maintain consistent warmth throughout the treatment. Secure this in place with a heavy towel.

While the pack is working, quietly meditate to connect the mind and body healing energies. This assists the spiritual essence of the plant to assist in your healing. Often people find the thoughts that occur in this meditative state are as important as the properties of the oil to their healing process. Journal your thoughts, feelings, or images that may occur during this treatment.

Adjust the heat setting to your comfort, but **do not fall asleep while using the heating pad!!** 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 pins, leave in place overnight.

How do I prevent staining from the oil?

To protect bedding or clothing from staining, plastic sheets from dry cleaning bags, old plastic table cloths, old shower curtains, old heavy bath towels, etc. are typically effective. Baking 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 plastic bag or glass jar for six months to a year as long as it does not become rancid or soiled. Packs should not be shared with other 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, or until symptoms subside.

For acute conditions, use for 30 minutes nightly for five nights, take two nights off, then repeat the cycle for two weeks or until the condition is resolved.

Are there any contraindications to usage?

Do not use the packs during times of heavy bleeding, gaseous stomach, intestinal conditions, or during pregnancy.

On rare occasion a rash may occur at the site. This is a normal occurrence of the body's way to eliminate toxins. Cleanse the area with a solution of 1 TBL baking soda to one cup of warm water.

Recommended Reading and References

Gladstar, Rosemary, 1993; Herbal Healing for Women. Simon and Schuster, NY, NY.
McGary, William, M.D., 1993; The Oil That Heals, A Physicians Successes with Castor Oil
Northrup, Christiane, 1994, Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom. Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, NY, NY.
Soule, Deb, 1995; The Roots of Healing, A Women's Book of Herbs. Carol Publishing Co., NY, NY