



WHITE MOUNTAIN MEDICINE

Home Hydrotherapy

## Castor Oil Pack

The castor bean (*Oleum ricini*), also known as Palma Christi, due to its shape and healing properties, is known principally as a cathartic (strong laxative). A gentler use is in the form of a pack placed over the abdomen, usually with heat applied. The oil is absorbed into the lymphatic circulation, promoting lymph movement, providing a stimulus to the immune system and supporting detoxification.

The castor oil pack has many applications, and is specific in cases of uterine fibroids and ovarian cysts that are nonmalignant. Other conditions which respond well include: headaches, liver disorders, constipation, intestinal disorders, gallbladder inflammation or stones, conditions with poor elimination, night time urinary frequency and inflamed joints. During pregnancy or menstruation, use the pack without the heating pad.

### Supplies:

- One 10-18" x 24-48" unbleached wool or cotton flannel
- Castor Oil
- Hot water bottle or heat source
- Plastic sheet (clear kitchen wrap, garbage bag or baby mattress material)
- Bath towel, old
- Baking soda

### Procedure:

- (1) Choose a container, zip lock bag or thick towel in which to store your castor oil pack.
- (2) Fold the flannel to a size appropriate to cover the area you are treating.
- (3) Pour 3-10 tablespoons of oil over the flannel until it is moistened.
- (4) Lie or recline, preferably with feet elevated (use of a pillow under knees and feet works well), placing the flannel directly on the skin over the treatment area. Cover with the plastic in order to protect clothing or bedding. Place the heat source on top of the plastic. Cover heat source with the bath towel in order to conserve heat.

REST. This is an excellent time to now practice visualization, meditation or relaxation breathing. This may involve placing one hand on your diaphragm and the other on your lower abdomen. As you breathe in, force your lower abdomen to swell like a balloon. With each breath out, practice relaxing your jaw and shoulders. As you practice more, relax all muscles in your body. Alternatively to these, you may just sleep. Some people wear the pack all night using an ace bandage to hold it in place.

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The treatment should last 15-60 minutes, depending upon your tolerance. Begin slowly and work up to longer periods. **BE SURE TO STAY WELL HYDRATED DURING AND AFTER THE TREATMENT.**

When finished, either rub the oil into your skin (recommended) or cut it with a solution of baking soda and water (1 Tbsp to 1 pint of water). Fold the flannel and plastic together with the plastic towards the outside, and place it in a container or folded in a towel. The pack does not have to be refrigerated and can be used for 6 months to one year, adding more oil as needed to keep the pack moist. If castor oil is getting your sheets, reduce the amount of oil. Replace the pack after it begins to change color.

For maximum effectiveness, it is necessary to apply the pack as often as possible. Aim for *at least* 4 consecutive days per week. Patients who use the pack daily will receive the most beneficial effects.

**Pregnancy modification:** This treatment is very safe during pregnancy, but *NO* heat is used. Just place the pack on the abdomen as directed above without the heat source -or- massage the oil right into the skin.

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