

What is Activated Charcoal?

1. Activated charcoal is commonly used in alternative and mainstream medicine. Activated charcoal absorbs a large amount of toxins and contaminants within the body. It's given as a treatment to children and animals that accidentally poison themselves drinking household products. **Activated charcoal** is not the same as regular barbecue charcoal. Activated charcoal is very porous and absorbs toxins quickly. The charcoal is made from carbon and ground into very fine granules, about the size of a dust speck of dust, which work like sponges. Then the material is activated through different processes.

Activating the Charcoal

2. Activating the charcoal allows it to absorb anything it comes in contact with. Eating a spoonful of **activated charcoal** is like swallowing millions of tiny sponges. Each pore within the charcoal grain soaks up anything harmful and eliminates it through the digestive tract. The material traps and holds organic chemicals, nitrates and toxins.

Carbonization Manufacturing Process

3. Carbonization is the first process and it involves activating the charcoal with gasses to open up the pores. The charcoal is then placed in a tank where it is treated with at 600 to 900 degrees C without any air, and then it is infused with nitrogen and argon. The material is then exposed to steam and oxygen at temperatures that range from 650 to 1200 degrees C.

Chemical Manufacturing Process

4. Another method to create **activated charcoal** is through a chemical activation process. Chemicals such as phosphoric acid, sodium hydroxide, zinc chloride, and potassium hydroxide are used to open up the pores of the material. The charcoal is then treated without oxygen at temperatures that range from 450 to 900 degrees C. Chemical activation is a much shorter process, however this method can sometimes leave behind traces of certain chemicals in small amounts.

Various forms

5. Activated charcoal can be made in powdered or granule form. Smaller particles are preferred, but powdered activated charcoal is slightly more expensive because the smaller pieces are more effective. The theory is that the smaller pieces travel more effectively through the digestive system.

**Activated charcoal** works to treat poisoning because it binds with some poisonous agents and helps them pass through the body without being absorbed. When activated charcoal is prescribed by a physician in this way it may be taken in several doses. However, as a supplement, activated charcoal has not been shown to be effective in treating other conditions such as excess gas, cholesterol or hangovers. The side effects from activated charcoal include constipation and black stools. Activated charcoal may also prevent some drugs from being absorbed by the body, therefore it should not be taken at the same time as other medications.