

Activated charcoal is a supplement that is sold over-the-counter to treat several conditions including excess gas, high cholesterol, and preventing hangovers. Medicinal activated charcoal is also used in emergency medicine to treat certain types of poisoning. Activated charcoal is designed for medicinal use, and is not the same as the charcoal that is used in products that remove pet odors and in fish tank filters. 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.

#### Instructions

1. Pour the activated charcoal into a fine mesh sieve and rinse it with hot tap water.
2. Put the charcoal in a pot and boil in water for about 15 minutes. As impurities leave the charcoal, it will emit a foul odor; boil until all odor dissipates. You may need to re-rinse and boil the charcoal several times before the odor completely disappears.
3. Put the charcoal in a baking dish to dry for several hours. The vapor from the charcoal is flammable, so be sure to keep the area well ventilated.
4. Bake the charcoal in the dish at 300 degrees F and heat for about three hours. Because the charcoal vapor is flammable, use an electric oven.
5. Activated charcoal, also called [activated carbon](#), is commonly used to filter impurities from water used for human consumption as well as in aquariums and fish tanks. Chlorine, pesticides and industrial solvents are among the contaminants activated charcoal can remove from water.

Activated charcoal can also be used to purify air and other gases and for the distillation of alcoholic beverages; it has also been implemented in medicine to treat poisoning. You can reuse activated charcoal by heat treating it at home with just a few instruments.