

[Activated charcoal](#) has been used for thousands of years, dating as far back as 1550 BC, to treat medical conditions. Because activated charcoal is so absorbent, it is often used to treat individuals who have been poisoned, have overdosed on drugs, have intestinal discomfort, and who are suffering from a wide variety of health conditions.

First Aid for Poisoning

Because activated charcoal has such a high absorbency rate it is often used to treat individuals who have ingested poison or who have overdosed on drugs. In its powdered, carbon form (and sometimes in a liquid suspension form) the charcoal can absorb poisons in both the stomach and intestinal tract. Activated charcoal is known to absorb up to 60 percent of any poisonous substance that reaches the stomach.

Body Detoxification

[Activated charcoal](#) is believed to have the ability to help naturally detoxify the body. It is very commonly included as an active ingredient in colon cleansers and other body detox products. It is believed that the activated charcoal will help to pull toxins from the body as it passes through the digestive system, thus energizing and rejuvenating the system.

Digestive Ailments

Individuals suffering from bloating, gas and diarrhea find [activated charcoal](#) to be a soothing remedy. The charcoal will enter the digestive tract and absorb the excess gas causing the individual's intestinal discomfort. Activated charcoal is used to treat painful digestive ailments of this nature because of its fast-acting properties.

Anti-Aging Properties

Studies show that activated charcoal prevents body tissues from undergoing certain cellular changes associated with aging. The function of the liver, adrenal glands and kidneys are especially affected--often improving with regular use. The average lifespan of the test animals participating in the study was increased by 34 percent.

Reduced Cholesterol

It is believed that [activated charcoal](#) helps to lower the amount of cholesterol, lipids, and triglycerides found in the blood. In turn, the functions of the heart, liver and brain in individuals who take activated charcoal regularly are enhanced, and the instance of high cholesterol and coronary artery disease decreases.

Fighting Viruses

Some individuals who have had colds or flu viruses have reported that taking activated charcoal significantly reduced the severity of their symptoms. Activated charcoal has the ability to prevent bacteria and viruses from remaining active, absorbing many of their toxins before they have a chance to spread throughout the body. [Activated charcoal](#) has been used for more serious viruses, such as cholera and dysentery, as well.

Activated Charcoal Is Safe

While ingesting activated charcoal is very safe, you should not begin a charcoal regime without first seeking the advice of your physician or health-care provider. Because of its absorbent properties, activated charcoal may interfere with other medications you take, so it is important to wait the proper amount of time after taking one to take the other. Your doctor will be able to help you to determine which brand, dosage and absorbency is right for your particular needs.