

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

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Memorial Sloan Kettering  
Cancer Center

[Make an Appointment](#)

[Back](#)

[Search About Herbs](#)

[About a Bovine Colostrum & Treatment](#)

[Refer a Patient](#)

[Refer a Patient](#)

## ABOUT US

[Our mission, vision & core values](#)

[Leadership](#)

[History](#)

[Equality, diversity & inclusion](#)

[Annual report](#)

[Give to MSK](#)

## What is it?

Some studies suggest that bovine colostrum in various forms can help treat diarrhea or infections.

Bovine colostrum is the milk produced by cows for the first several days following birthing. It is rich in antibodies, growth factors, and cytokines, and protects the newborn calf from infections. It has also been used as a dietary supplement in the last decade.

Several clinical trials suggest that various bovine colostrum preparations may be helpful to treat or prevent diarrhea, but additional studies are needed. Similarly, more studies are needed on the conditions under which it may confer immune function benefits.

Bovine colostrum contains trace amounts of estrogen, so patients with hormone-sensitive cancers should discuss this product with their doctors before consumption. In addition, individuals allergic to dairy products should avoid this product.

## What are the potential uses and benefits?

- Diarrhea

Certain bovine colostrum formulas have been used in small studies with positive results, but larger trials are needed.

- Infections

Small studies suggest bovine colostrum may increase immune response, but larger studies are needed.

- Gastrointestinal disorders

A few studies suggest that bovine colostrum may be helpful, but more studies are needed.

## What are the side effects?

### Case report

Severe allergic reaction: In a 16-year-old boy with cow's milk allergy, from a bovine colostrum-based cream applied to a surgical wound.

## What else do I need to know?

### Do Not Take if:

- You are allergic to dairy products: Bovine colostrum is from milk produced by cows.
- You have a hormone-sensitive cancer: Bovine colostrum contains trace amounts of estrogen, so patients with hormone-sensitive cancers should discuss use of this product with their doctors before consumption.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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