

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

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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 questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you’re not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.
Bovine Colostrum - Last updated on December 8, 2021

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