



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Butcher's Broom

This information describes the common uses of Butcher's Broom, how it works, and its possible side effects.

Tell your healthcare providers about any dietary supplements you're taking, such as herbs, vitamins, minerals, and natural or home remedies. This will help them manage your care and keep you safe.

What is it?

Studies show benefit of Butcher's broom in patients with chronic venous insufficiency of the legs.

Butcher's broom contains chemicals called saponins that scientists think cause constriction of arteries and veins. Butcher's broom may also reduce inflammation and increase lymphatic flow, but these effects have not been fully confirmed in humans.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- **To treat circulatory disorders such as chronic venous insufficiency**

Small clinical studies have shown that products containing butcher's broom can help improve the symptoms of chronic venous insufficiency, but the long-term safety and effectiveness of these products are not known.

- **To treat constipation**

Evidence is lacking to support this claim.

- **To treat hemorrhoids**

Evidence is lacking to support this claim.

- **To reduce inflammation**

Lab studies show that compounds in butcher's broom have anti-inflammatory effects.

- **To relieve leg cramps**

Evidence is lacking to support this claim.

- **To treat lymphedema**

One clinical study showed that Cyclo 3 Fort, a butcher's broom product, reduced lymphedema in women who had undergone therapy for breast cancer.

- **To promote urination**

Evidence is lacking to support this claim.

What are the side effects?

- Diarrhea has been reported with the product Cyclo-3, but is less common with use of other formulations of butcher's broom.
- Papulo-erythematous pruritic eruption on legs, which spread within a few days to the entire skin, and produced oedema of the eyelids: In a 30-year-old pregnant woman following use of vasoconstrictor cream, containing butcher's broom extract, for treatment of varices.
- Pruritic erythematous lesions: In a 34-year-old woman following the local application of a haemorrhoid treatment cream containing ruscogenin. Several months later, she experienced a generalized eczematous cutaneous eruption the day after topical application of an anti-cellulite product, containing ruscogenin, on the lower limbs.

What else do I need to know?

Do Not Take if:

- You have diabetes (butcher's broom was reported to cause diabetic ketoacidosis, characterized by high levels of compounds called ketones in the blood.)

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.

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