

Coal tar treatments: everything you need to know.

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Accepted on August 12, 2021

Introduction

Coal tar, in various forms, can be used to treat a variety of skin diseases. It may have certain negative effects, and some treatments are required to contain a cancer warning in specific places. Experts, on the other hand, believe it is typically safe to use. Skin disorders such as psoriasis and eczema are treated with coal tar. It can also aid with itchiness, scaling, and inflammation. Because crude coal tar has a strong and unpleasant odour, dermatologists rarely utilise it. Shampoos, creams, gels, soaks, and lotions, on the other hand, include a more refined version of the substance. Coal tar products are frequently prescribed in conjunction with other treatments by dermatologists. Several coal tar therapies have been shown to be quite effective, with some people reporting total skin symptom relief, as well as protracted remissions without psoriasis [1].

Coal tar is a by-product of bituminous coal, or black coal, which contains bitumen, or asphalt, a tar-like substance. Patients with skin diseases like eczema or psoriasis are prescribed coal tar by dermatologists to relieve redness, itching, and inflammation. People with chronic plaque psoriasis may still be treated with the drug in its raw form, according to dermatologists. In certain cases, they may recommend a 2-5% coal tar in an emollient base, applied with dressings, and combined with UV radiation therapy. Coal tar treatments may help those with difficult-to-treat psoriasis on their soles or palms. Dermatologists may also prescribe it to people who have psoriasis on their scalp [2].

The effectiveness of coal tar treatments varies, and the amount of coal tar in a product cannot be used to predict its effectiveness. Patients who used a lotion containing 1% coal tar extract had better results than those who used a lotion containing 5% coal tar extract, according to one study. If a person wants to utilise coal tar, they should visit a dermatologist for product suggestions.

Coal tar treatments may be prescribed alone or as part of a treatment strategy that includes phototherapy, other drugs, or both.

- Itching, scalp psoriasis, plaque-type psoriasis, and scale may all benefit from coal tar.
- Psoriasis on the soles and palms of the hands and feet inflammation
- thickened skin
- eczema

Coal tar products are available in a number of topical applications. They can be found in products such as lotion, ointment, cream, gel, bath soaks, and shampoo. If a person is utilising a coal tar treatment on their body, they should apply it to their skin and massage it in. A dermatologist can advise on how often this should be done [3].

Wrapping the region after administering the therapy boosts the strength of the coal tar, but following the dermatologist's

directions will yield the best results. When using a coal tar shampoo, make sure it gets all the way to the scalp. In the treatment of chronic eczema, dermatologists may employ tar and crude coal tar extracts.

Coal tar is generally considered harmless by dermatologists, but it can cause skin irritation, rashes, or acne-like breakouts, unpleasant odour, swelling, stinging, or burning, dry or brittle hair, and stains on light-colored hair and clothing.

Does Coal Tar Cause Cancer?

Coal tar has been prescribed by dermatologists for the treatment of psoriasis for over a century, therefore specialists generally believe it is safe. Coal tar products must, however, be labelled with a cancer warning in some states, such as California. Due of animal experiments in which researchers exposed animals to significantly higher levels of coal tar than people would ordinarily use to treat psoriasis, authorities forced manufacturers to include this warning. Previous study into occupational studies focusing on those working with coal tar has also contributed to the cancer warning [4].

However, there is no proof that coal tar with a concentration of 0.5 to 5% causes cancer, according to studies.

According to certain research, certain chemicals in coal tar can cause cancer if a person is exposed to large amounts of them, such as during road paving or roofing. Coal tar should not be used by anyone who are sun sensitive or who take medications that make them more susceptible to UV light.

References

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