



## Turmeric – The Wonder Spice

*Written by Jill Grunewald: original version published in mix magazine*



Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) is an intensely-colored culinary spice – a close cousin of ginger and the essential ingredient in curry. It's how mustard gets its beautiful color and is a primary ingredient in Indian curry.

Curcumin is the bioactive compound found in turmeric and is commonly referred to as “holy powder.” A natural polyphenol (antioxidant), it has been used for centuries as both a food and a medicine, treating a variety of inflammatory health problems, including infections and wounds. Because of its superhero-like anti-inflammatory properties, today, research is showing that turmeric proves to be an honest to goodness miracle spice.

### Bright Star

In recent studies, turmeric has proven to outperform many pharmaceuticals in the treatment of a wide range of chronic, degenerative diseases, with promising prevention against cancer, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's disease. In 2007, an Advanced Experimental Medical Biology overview stated, "Curcumin has been shown to exhibit antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antiviral, antibacterial, antifungal, and anticancer activities and thus has a potential against various malignant diseases, diabetes, allergies, arthritis, Alzheimer's disease, and other chronic illnesses."

The recent and substantial research conducted around turmeric's anti-cancer compounds – both for the prevention and treatment of the disease – is worthy of everyone's attention. We all have cancer cells in our bodies that need new blood vessels to survive. According to the late Dr. David Servan-Schreiber, former clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh Medical School, and author of *Anticancer: A New Way of Life*, "Turmeric is the most powerful natural anti-inflammatory agent known to man and has the ability to slow down the growth of new blood vessels." If this supply of blood vessels is reduced or halted, the cancerous cells' development is greatly slowed or even suffocated. He continued, "Indians have vastly less cancer than we do because they eat curry every day."

A clinical trial performed at MD Anderson Cancer Center found that turmeric's effects were equivalent to or better than all currently available FDA approved cancer drugs, without the negative side effects. "No cancer has been found, to my knowledge, which is not affected by curcumin," states Bharat Aggarwal, Ph.D., professor in MD Anderson's Department of Experimental Therapeutics. "The reason curcumin is so effective against cancer is that it hits not just a single target or cell signaling pathway but dozens of targets implicated in cancer."



## **Powerful Brain Protector**

Turmeric has also been shown to prevent the harmful formation of certain proteins that are the characteristic presentation in neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. With the unique ability to cross the blood-brain barrier, curcumin activates biochemical changes in the brain that prevent the plaque and aggregation that cause these diseases. It has also shown to dissolve existing plaque that impedes cerebral function in Alzheimer's patients. The elders of India have the world's lowest rates of this devastating condition.

Because it inhibits the enzyme that promotes inflammation, pain, and swelling, turmeric is becoming widely used among arthritis sufferers. The benefits are two-fold – not only can turmeric act as an effective pain reliever, it also tames the inflammation that can cause arthritis discomfort. Some studies have shown that turmeric works best as a preventative measure, prior to the onset of arthritic pain.

## **A Host of Benefits**

According to Dr. Andrew Weil, founder and program director of the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine, "The bottom line is that the therapeutic advantages of turmeric and curcumin are almost too numerous to list."

- Helps prevent and treat cancer
- Reduces side effects of chemotherapy
- Prevents onset and progression of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's
- Anti-arthritic
- Relieves muscle and joint pain
- Natural anti-inflammatory
- Antibiotic, antiseptic, analgesic
- Speeds healing of wounds
- Digestive tonic
- Skin tonic, including improvement of psoriasis and eczema
- Slows progression of multiple sclerosis
- Strengthens ligaments
- Blood purifier
- Relieves cough
- Prevents arteries from clogging
- Heals stomach ulcers
- Helps metabolize fats
- Modulates and normalizes the immune system (especially beneficial for those with autoimmunity)

If you're not crazy about Indian food, there are other ways to get turmeric into the mix. Simply including a teaspoon or two to stews, soups, and rice is a great way to add this healing spice to your meals.

# HEALTHFUL ELEMENTS



Extensive research substantiates that few nutrients demonstrate such a vast range of benefits as turmeric. This amazingly beneficial spice may thwart many of today's devastating health conditions. Whether you cook with curry regularly or take it in supplemental form, it's safe to say that you'll benefit from a reduced risk of disease and enhanced quality of life.

**For supplementation**, my high recommendation is [Restore](#), which also contains black seed oil. This is the only turmeric I'll ever take. Most people only need 1 tsp. to 1/3 of a pack/day.

## **Turmeric tea**

(Source: drweil.com)

- Bring four cups of water to a boil.
- Add one teaspoon of ground turmeric and reduce to a simmer for 10 minutes.
- Strain the tea through a fine sieve into a cup, add honey and/or lemon to taste.

"While ground versions are more convenient, it's worthwhile to experiment with freshly grated turmeric for a more vibrant flavor." – Dr. Andrew Weil

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