



A Natural Alternative To Drugs For Pain Relief Is Herbal Turmeric

Turmeric is widely used as a spice in Indian and other South Asian cooking. It has a peppery, warm and bitter flavor and a mild fragrance slightly reminiscent of orange and ginger, and while it is best known as one of the ingredients used to make curry, it also gives ballpark mustard its bright yellow color. Turmeric comes from the root of the *Curcuma longa* plant and has a tough brown skin and a deep orange flesh. It is native to Indonesia and southern India, several parts of Asia, and Africa where it has been harvested for more than 5,000 years.

Turmeric has long been used as a powerful anti-inflammatory in both the Chinese and Indian systems of medicine. It is only in recent years that Western scientists have increasingly recognized the medicinal properties of turmeric. Growing evidence suggests that turmeric may afford protection against neurodegenerative diseases. Prostate cancer—the second leading cause of cancer death in American men with 500,000 new cases appearing each year—is a rare occurrence among men in India, whose low risk is attributed to a diet rich in brassica family vegetables and the curry spice, turmeric. It can also help with liver conditions by minimizing liver damages caused by taking excess alcohol regularly or using pain-killer.

Curcumin is thought to be the primary pharmacological agent in turmeric. Curcumin may be able to prevent the oxidation of cholesterol in the body. It has been shown to prevent colon cancer in rodent studies. It inhibits proliferation, induces apoptosis, and inhibits angiogenesis of prostate cancer cells in vivo. As an antioxidant, curcumin is able to neutralize free radicals, chemicals that can travel through the body and cause great amounts of damage to healthy cells and cell membranes.

In addition, curcumin was found to suppress cancer cell proliferation and to induce cell cycle arrest and apoptosis (cell suicide) in the lung cancer cells. Its cholesterol-lowering effects are the result of the curry spice's active constituent, which research reveals is a messaging molecule that communicates with genes in liver cells, directing them to increase the production of mRNA (messenger proteins) that direct the creation of receptors for LDL (bad) cholesterol. A recent study involving mice has shown that it can slow the spread of breast cancer into lungs and other body parts.

National Institutes of Health has four clinical trials underway to study curcumin treatment for pancreatic cancer, multiple myeloma, Alzheimer's, and colorectal cancer. In research published in the Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology, when 10 healthy



volunteers consumed 500 mg of curcumin per day for 7 days, not only did their blood levels of oxidized cholesterol drop by 33%, but their total cholesterol dropped by 11.

In Ayurvedic medicine, turmeric is thought to have many medicinal properties and many in India use it as a readily available antiseptic for cuts, burns and bruises. Plus, an important part of the good news reported is the fact that although curcumin has been found to be safe at very large doses, this component of turmeric was effective at a concentration as low as 100 milligrams.

Finally, Turmeric is promoted mainly as an anti-inflammatory herbal remedy that is said to produce far fewer side effects than commonly used pain relievers. It is not intended to substitute for the medical expertise and advice of your primary health care provider. If you are taking prescription drugs, speak with your health care provider or pharmacist before using herbs or dietary supplements. If you are feeling painful inflammation and want to try a natural route, give turmeric a try.

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