

[IMAGE]

Beat Inflammation With Turmeric

Turmeric is a member of the ginger family. It has been used for thousands of years in India as a spice and food additive, helping give many curries color and flavor. The plant's root and rhizome, or underground stem, are used medicinally.

Historically, turmeric has been prescribed to treat a wide range of conditions, from skin diseases and constipation to poor vision and rheumatism. More current research has found it to be beneficial in patients with indigestion and ulcers; a double-blind trial conducted in 1986 found it to be superior than pharmaceuticals for treating postsurgical inflammation.

The active ingredient in turmeric is called curcumin, which has been shown to have a variety of beneficial properties. Among its documented actions, it acts as an antioxidant and protects against damage from free radicals; reduces inflammation by lowering histamine levels; protects the liver from toxic compounds; and reduces platelets from clumping together, which improves circulation and helps protect against atherosclerosis. Anecdotal evidence has shown that curcumin may fight cancer and inhibit HIV from spreading, although further studies need to be conducted to determine its true effectiveness.

The German Commission E recommends a daily dose of 1.5-3 grams of turmeric root. Some practitioners also recommend a standardized turmeric extract containing 400-600mg of curcumin three times per day in capsule or tablet form.

Whole, cut and powdered turmeric root is available in a variety of forms, the most common of which are capsules and coated tablets. Turmeric tinctures and compound preparations are also available.

Used as recommended, turmeric is generally safe; however, some anecdotal reports have linked to extended use and overdosing. It should not be used by pregnant or lactating women. In addition, patients with gallstones or obstructed bile ducts should avoid turmeric unless approved by a health care provider.

There are currently no well-known drug interactions with turmeric.

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