

# CURCUMIN

## health benefits and cautions explained

Curcumin may be one of the most versatile health supplements out there. It is the major component of the herb turmeric and is part of the ginger family. It's the curcumin that gives turmeric its beautiful vibrant yellow colour. People have used this versatile herb in curries and stir-fries for many years due to its subtle spicy flavour.

It's certainly becoming more widely used as a supplement than ever before and there are plenty of high quality studies to confirm most of the benefits but there are some cautions to be aware of too.

### Lets start by outlining the benefits.

It is probably most well known therapeutically for it's anti-inflammatory action; this can help to reduce joint pain. In one systemic review they found curcumin to be an effective and safe anti-inflammatory across 6 human trials. (1) In one pilot study on patients with rheumatoid arthritis the results found that the patients taking curcumin had significant improvement over patients taking diclofenac sodium. (2) In people with osteoarthritis CRP, an inflammatory marker, was shown to decrease whilst taking curcumin for a period of three months. (3)

Part of its anti inflammatory action may also be responsible for its ability to improve heart health, as it has been shown to be useful for some heart conditions, including atherosclerosis. (4) Although some people believe that it could improve memory loss in Alzheimer's patients so far the evidence does not confirm this. (5) All of these benefits make it sound like a wonder drug!

### There are some important cautions to take note of if you are going to take curcumin.

Some studies have found it can cause gastrointestinal side effects such as diarrhoea and nausea. (7) These side effects were dose dependant and therefore reducing the dose can be enough to reduce an adverse stomach effects.

Turmeric has blood-thinning properties and many pharmaceuticals have the same action such as aspirin and warfarin, therefore it is not advisable to use curcumin if you take anti coagulant or anti platelet medication.

Curcumin also lowers the blood glucose levels so if you have diabetes and take medication curcumin can cause the blood sugar level to drop further resulting in hypoglycaemia.

It can also be stimulating for the gall bladder, making the body produce more bile so if you have gall stones it is best avoided.

Generally speaking the FDA have found curcumin to be a safe supplement. (6) Its bioavailability needs to be considered, the body poorly absorbs curcumin when it is taken on its own and it is best taken with phospholipids to enhance this absorption or a black pepper extract called piperine. (5,6) Good supplements will include one of these two ingredients.

On the whole most studies have found curcumin to be safe in doses lower than 8000mg per day. (6) As a general guideline 2000mg per day should be sufficient to have a therapeutic effect. (7) As always work with the guidance of your own health care professional.



## Turmeric Tea

from the Beat Lupus Cookbook  
available at  
[www.beatlupusnaturally.com](http://www.beatlupusnaturally.com)

**Makes:** 1 cup  
(can easily be doubled or tripled)

*Healing, anti inflammatory  
tea with added coconut  
oil and black pepper  
for enhanced absorption*

**Prep time:** 5 mins  
**Cooking time:** 5 mins

### Ingredients:

Juice from half a lemon  
1/2 teaspoon fresh turmeric  
grated  
1/4 teaspoon of coconut oil  
1 teaspoon honey  
1 cup of boiling water

### Instructions:

Combine all of the ingredients  
with ground black pepper.  
Let sit for 5 minutes  
before drinking.

**CKHEALTH**   
*and wellbeing*

1.Chainani-Wu N. Safety and anti-inflammatory activity of curcumin: a component of tumeric (*Curcuma longa*). *J Altern Complement Med* 2003;9(1):161-8

2.Chandran B, Goel A. A randomized, pilot study to assess the efficacy and safety of curcumin in patients with active rheumatoid arthritis. *Phytother Res* 2012;26(11):1719-25.

3.Belcaro G, Cesarone MR, Dugall M, Pellegrini L, Ledda A, Grossi MG, et al. Product-evaluation registry of Meriva®, a curcumin-phosphatidylcholine complex, for the complementary management of osteoarthritis. *Panminerva Med*. 2010.

4.Wongcharoen W, Phrommintikul A. The protective role of curcumin in cardiovascular diseases. *Int J Cardiol* 2009;133(2):145-51.

5.Ringman JM CG, Tend E, et al. Oral curcumin for the treatment of mild-to-moderate Alzheimer's disease: Tolerability and clinical and biomarker efficacy results of a placebo-controlled 24-week study. Oral curcumin for the treatment of mild-to-moderate Alzheimer's disease: Tolerability and clinical and biomarker efficacy results of a placebo-controlled 24-week study. *Proceedings of the Abstract of International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease USA* 2008.

6.Aggarwal BB, Harikumar KB. Potential therapeutic effects of curcumin, the anti-inflammatory agent, against neurodegenerative, cardiovascular, pulmonary, metabolic, autoimmune and neoplastic diseases. *Int J Biochem Cell Biol* 2009;41(1):40-59.

7.Gupta SC, Patchva S, Aggarwal BB. Therapeutic roles of curcumin: lessons learned from clinical trials. *AAPS J* 2013;15(1):195-218.