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THE POWER OF GOLD

GOT INFLAMMATION?
THINK CURCUMIN.

THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF CURCUMIN CAN BE SIGNIFICANT, BUT ITS EFFECTS HAVE BEEN LIMITED BECAUSE IT IS NOT WELL ABSORBED IN THE BODY. Several recent breakthroughs have led to formulas with greater bioavailability. And that's welcome news.

Curcumin—an antioxidant compound in turmeric that gives the spice its yellow color—has been shown to reduce inflammation in the body. It's been studied as a potential treatment for a wide range of disorders including colon cancer and osteoarthritis.

Anti-inflammation discovery

Ohio State University researchers recently developed a new formula that may release curcumin's anti-inflammatory properties throughout the body.

The researchers mixed curcumin powder with castor oil and polyethylene glycol (a substance commonly used as a laxative). That process allowed the curcumin to be more easily absorbed in the gut, so it could enter the bloodstream and tissues. In laboratory animals, the formula was shown to shut down an acute inflammatory reaction.

Curcumin has been used for centuries in Ayurvedic medicine. The Ohio State team is investigating whether it can be useful as a daily supplement to battle disease.

Depression relief

Another new curcumin supplement with increased bioavailability helped to relieve symptoms of depression in a group of people with major depressive disorder. The improvements began after four weeks and continued through the end of the eight-week study. Participants took 500 milligrams of the supplement twice daily, or a placebo.

An earlier study of the same supplement found that it worked as well as Prozac in treating major depressive disorder without the major side effects. In a formulation called BCM-95, the supplement appears to boost curcumin's bioavailability through a

process called micronizing and the addition of essential oils from turmeric.

Beyond curry

Turmeric is a relative of ginger, and it's a popular ingredient in Indian cuisine. It adds spiciness and a golden color to curry. Turmeric intake is quite high in India, and the incidence of Alzheimer's disease in that country is relatively low. There is some speculation that the two things may be linked.

"Studies have shown that Alzheimer's is much less common in India than in the United States and a dietary factor may be making the difference," says board certified internist Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, author of *Real Cause, Real Cure*. "It's turmeric. The active ingredient in turmeric is curcumin, and studies show that curcumin can dissolve the amyloid plaques that are a hallmark of Alzheimer's. Unfortunately, you have to eat as much curry as they do in India to absorb enough for the protection effect. An alternative: A new form of curcumin (BCM-95) boosts absorption of the compound sevenfold."

Other uses

Curcumin has also been used to treat joint pain, digestive issues, and skin problems. It may be useful in the treatment of cancer. A recent study found that it may help increase a protein inhibitor that is known to slow the progression of mesothelioma—a cancer of the lining of the lung that has been linked to asbestos.

Curcumin is available in capsules and other forms, including powders and teas. It's found in many ointments for the relief of joint pain. ■■■

SELECTED SOURCES "Curcumin" by Mary S. Easton, UCLA Alzheimer's Translation Center, <http://alzheimer.neurology.ucla.edu> ■ "Curcumin for the Treatment of Major Depression: A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo Controlled Study" by A.L. Lopresti et al., *J Affect Disord*, 10/14 ■ "Curcumin: A Review of Anticancer Properties and Therapeutic Activity..." by R. Wilken et al., *Mol Cancer*, 2/11 ■ "Curcumin, Special Peptides Boost Cancer-Blocking PIAS3 to Neutralize Cancer Activating STAT3 in Mesothelioma," Case Western Reserve University, 9/18/14 ■ "Curcumin as a Therapeutic Agent" by J. Epstein et al., *Br J Nutr*, 1/26/10 ■ "Efficacy and Safety of *Curcuma domestica* Extracts in Patients with Knee Osteoarthritis" by V. Kuptniratsaikul et al., *J Altern Complement Med*, 8/09 ■ "Enhanced Bioavailability and Safety of Curcumagalactomanosides as a Dietary Ingredient" by V.B. Liju et al., *Food Funct*, 11/27/14 ■ "Highly Stabilized Curcumin Nanoparticles Tested in an In Vitro Blood-Brain Barrier Model and in Alzheimer's Disease..." by K.K. Cheng et al., *AAPS J*, 4/13 ■ "New Research Adds Spice to Curcumin's Health-Promoting Benefits," Ohio State University, 11/6/14

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