



HEALTH BENEFITS OF TURMERIC

Turmeric is more than a delicious kitchen spice. Let's deep dive in a waterfall of scientific studies and overview what it's good for.

Curcuma longa as a brain tonic

Research shows that turmeric has positive effects on the brain. Researchers find it logical to carry out further research into the effect of this tasty medicinal plant. Furthermore, the research shows that a water extract works better than an ethanol extract. Researchers speak about the “neuropharmacological” activity of *Curcuma longa*. This means that it could have medicinal effects for the brain. Other researchers see that *curcuma longa* initiates several activities in the brain. It might be beneficial for people with brain problems like Alzheimer’s, Parkinson and depression.

Curcuma longa carries heavy metals

In a review article written by Pakistani scientists and published in a Romanian journal, research shows that substances in *curcuma longa* bind to heavy metals such as cadmium and lead, rendering them harmless and making it leaving the body. This characteristic explains the positive effect on the brain, the researchers say. Toxic heavy metals can accumulate in the body and eventually the brain where it may cause medical problems.

Curcuma longa against depression

If a healing plant is good for the brain, scientists often see that it also has medicinal effect against depression. *Curcuma longa* has been tested for its antidepressant effect. It appears that the levels of serotonin, nor-epinephrine and dopamine are increased when *curcuma longa* is consumed. In people with depression, the level of these hormones is too low.

Curcumin against Alzheimer’s

There are research data that suggest that *curcuma longa*, or in this case the best-known medicinal substance curcumin, is a good agent in Alzheimer’s disease. The researchers also see that long-term use of some NSAID or synthetic anti-inflammatory painkillers can lead to Alzheimer’s problems. Furthermore, the researchers think that the anti-inflammatory and analgesic effect of *curcuma longa*, at the same time with the elimination of oxidative stress as a result of medication use, might help against the formation of Alzheimer’s.

Curcumin, active substance in curcuma longa

Curcumin is the main active ingredient in *curcuma longa*, at least that’s what scientists say. It appears that this substance is difficult to absorb for the body. It will be absorbed a little bit, but the bio-availability can be better, researchers say. In any case, it has been shown that curcumin can help to relieve irritable bowel syndrome, pancreatitis, arthritis and multiple types of cancer. In addition, curcumin provides anti-inflammatory effect in the intestines, which helps against inflammation of the intestinal wall or a stomach ulcer. It is also a good remedy for Crohn’s disease.

What this actually means is that curcumin is a strong healing phytochemical, but maybe it is not beneficial when consumed as a pure supplement. Maybe it needs its neighbour components from turmeric to be absorbed better. If you prepare the whole root of *curcuma longa*, the medicinal effect seems to be better. In other words, there is still no evidence that a supplement containing curcumin produces outstanding health benefits. Rather, it seems that studies show that for medicinal use it is preferable to consume the whole root or turmeric powder, because this provides more than just one curcuminoid, and a wide variety of other



healthy phytonutrients. Studies show that plant components have a synergistic effect. That means the medicinal effect of curcumin increases by the effect of other components in the root of curcuma longa. This is a natural way of increasing “bio-availability”.

Antioxidant effect

Antioxidants in curcuma longa are comparable in quality to vitamin C or E. The antioxidant effect of curcuma longa is partly responsible for the medicinal effects. The antioxidants go in search of inflammation-promoting free radicals. During that process, curcuma longa does five things:

Firstly, it lowers the production of histamine. Histamine is a hormone that causes inflammation,

Secondly, the effect of an anti-inflammatory adrenaline hormone, the body’s own cortisol, increases.

Thirdly, the circulation is improved so that the toxins, occupying cartilage, joints and bones, can leave the body more easily via the blood. That is a reason for curcuma to cure rheumatic diseases, but it also helps against arteriosclerosis. Curcuma longa causes blood clots that can



lead to arteriosclerosis, strokes and heart problems to dissolve faster.

Fourth, there is improved liver function by curcuma longa. This improves the entire digestion, the bile tract, and the immune system.

Fifthly, it stimulates the action of macrophages, as a result of which more free radicals are captured and oxidative stress is reduced. Macrophages are an important part of our immune system, but are greatly underestimated in Western medicine because antibiotics dismantle the immune system promoting effect of macrophages. Instead, macrophages could be stimulated in strength in order to cope with diseases, free radicals and oxidative stress better. The devastating effect on macrophages is one of the major disadvantages of antibiotics.

Medicinal effects and antioxidant effect reinforce each other

The combination of medicinal effects together strengthen the medicinal effect, the antioxidant effect. That is the reason why curcuma longa does not have one, but many,

healing applications. Many diseases share a common cause in the formation of free radicals. When our immune system produces many body-own antioxidants, and when we eat healthy, the chance of developing diseases in general, is much smaller.

Curcuma longa against bile stones

Curcuma longa is good for the bile and prevents bile diseases. Researchers say that it can prevent cholelithiasis, or bile stones, by the protective effect on the bile. This may cause blockage in the bile tract and that is a nasty disease. By regularly adding curcuma to the meal, you keep the bile function flowing in good condition.

Curcuma longa, healthy for the liver

Bile carries substances with which the liver functions better. By improving the flow of bile, an improved liver function occurs. That is good for the digestion of food. The body will uptake more nutrients. From studies in which test animals were given free radical damage to the liver by the administration of paracetamol aka acetaminophen, it appears that curcuma longa helps the liver to recover faster. The liver protection effect is considered equal to that of silymarin. Silymarin is a component milk thistle and its seeds are seen as one of the best preventive-medicinal products for the liver.

Curcuminoids in curcuma longa

curcumin gives the yellow color to curcuma longa. This natural and healthy dye belongs to the three curcuminoids, a group of substances that are fat-soluble and rich in polyphenols. The other two are desmethoxycurcumin and bis-desmethoxycurcumin. These are a lot less researched than curcumin but also have medicinal properties. If you take a supplement with only curcumin, you will not receive the other healthy substances of turmeric.

Curcuma longa against inflammation



Inflammation is inhibited just as quickly by curcuma as by standard synthetic medicines such as cortisole and phenylbutazone, according to scientific research. Researchers have done all sorts of studies into the way in which curcuma works exactly, but that biochemical process is quite complex to map, partly because much more needs to be discovered about the different components that exist in medicinal plants, of which there is still no complete picture. Some medicinal plants contain



thousands of substances, but there are only hundreds of substances known. Inflammation is the source of many diseases, and inflammation-inhibiting medicinal plants can often be used in several ways. *Curcuma longa* can be used both internally and externally. You can apply curcuma to the skin, but do not let it come into contact with clothing because it also works as a strong dye.

Anti cancer effect of curcuma longa

Curcumin is a carcinogen-killer, which means that it effectively kills cancer cells, according to scientists. The production of cancerous tumors is distinguished by multiple phases. curcumin stops cancer in three of those phases. The first phase is the increased chance of tumor. curcumin can repair damage that free radicals have caused, reducing the risk of cancer. Furthermore, it inhibits the formation of blood vessels in a cancer cell. Thirdly, it can stop an existing cancer cell in growth.

There is another interesting aspect of *curcuma longa*. It also improves glutathione levels, which is a great antioxidant. This leads to less liver fat and therefore storing of fewer toxins are stored. This effect detoxifies the liver. Due to the improved improved liver function, mutagens and carcinogens, are removed from the body. turmeric delivers more ways to cure from cancer. There still is no science-based medical advise to use turmeric as a medicine or preventive.

Curcuma longa anti-parasite effect

Curcuma longa can prevent an overgrowth of the parasite *Eimera Maxima*, according to scientific research. It is an anti-parasite agent. Its effect against the parasites *Plasmodium falciparum* and *Leishmania* is reasonably well. *P. falciparum* is the malaria parasite and the other causes leishmaniasis, a tropical skin disease against which there still is no pharmaceutical, synthetic medicine available. In plant medicine, you often see that a strong medicinal plant provide antimicrobial effects as well. Many diseases, like cancer and arteriosclerosis, are accompanied by overgrowth of pathogenic organisms. *Curcuma longa* is also antibacterial against several bacteria such as the *heliobacter pylori*.

Curcuma longa, good for heart and blood vessels

When cholesterol is no longer used by the body, it is converted into bile acids. The body makes cholesterol itself if it detects too much low-grade inflammation or oxidative stress. Cholesterol then transports antioxidants, medicinal substances to the place where it is needed. These are problem areas. Now *curcuma longa* is a proven to reduce cholesterol. This is because curcuma helps to inhibit the inflammation. There is less cholesterol needed to adjust problem areas in the blood vessels. As a result, less cholesterol is measurable in our blood after turmeric use.

Turmeric is good for your blood

The triglyceride levels go down by adding *curcuma longa* to the meal. High triglyceride levels cause free radicals and arteriosclerosis. At the same time, it is one of the reasons why *curcuma longa* is good for the blood circulation, as we have seen before. All these diseases are tied to a common cause: low grade inflammation. Turmeric is able to counter inflammatory processes.

Curcuma longa regulates blood sugar levels

Better regulation of triglyceride levels and cholesterol is important for people with diabetes. In addition, curcuma longa has a blood sugar-leveling effect. Researchers notice that the preventive effect on heart disease goes hand in hand with the blood sugar lowering effects. That is mainly because of the common causal factors, inflammatory processes which are being reduced by the intake of curcuma longa.

Curcuma longa is good for the intestines

According to scientists there are four reasons why curcuma longa is good for the intestines. Curcuma longa stimulates the secretion of substances through the intestinal mucous membrane. As a result, more gastric juices are secreted, which improves digestion. Furthermore, the body produces more sodium bicarbonate after intake of curcuma longa. This makes the food to be consumed more basic and improves digestion and elimination of toxins.

The pancreas is stimulated to produce more enzymes. This improves the functioning of digestion and immune system.

In addition, curcuma longa can also cure acute stomach problems such as a stomach ulcer. This effect functions in a preventive way as well. This makes turmeric a protector against stomach complaints.

Good against irritable bowel syndrome

Research shows that curcuma longa has a medicinal effect on people with irritable bowel syndrome. In one study, people were given curcuma longa on their plates for four weeks. This resulted in less bloating, less flatulence, and less of other signs of irritable bowel syndrome. Other research shows that turmeric can help against Crohn's disease. Crohn's disease can be seen as a more severe form of irritable bowel syndrome in which the intestines are chronically inflamed.

Curcumin against stomach ulcer

In the meantime, there have been so many studies published that the proposition that synthetic medicines offer advantages over plant medicines, is untenable. Though, still there are hardly efforts to introduce plant medicines in the mainstream pharmaceutical view. This happens while a rising number of people is looking for better than synthetic medicines by themselves. This movement is worldwide. It is time to do research on people with medicinal food or supplements. Each time this does happen, the results are astounding.

People who had a stomach ulcer as a diagnosis were given a supplement of curcumin. After four weeks, 48% had no stomach ulcer. That proportion grew steadily, after 12 weeks, 79% of the patients had no stomach ulcer anymore. That means that in some people it may be an effective medicine. In any cases, it would serve as a preventive tool.

Medicinal cooking tips for turmeric

There is fresh curcuma longa or dried turmeric powder for sale. Fresh turmeric you often find at markets or tropical supermarkets. For many dishes it is easy to use powder but in



a smoothie or omelet, you can also use fresh ones. You can play with the color, a bit of turmeric through mashed potatoes makes it deep yellow. That gives the food more food value, more color, more fun, more enjoyment.

Fun ways to add turmeric to your daily life.

1. Mix it together with boiling brown rice, to make rice turn yellow
2. Over potatoes, wholegrain pasta, cooking banana, celeriac and other basic vegetables.
3. Over green salads, as an addition to black pepper
4. Added to a (sweet) potato salad
5. In smoothies
6. In a omelet to turn it yellow
7. As a tea herb
8. Added in a dough mix to bake burgers
9. Added in a vegetable soup
10. Slowjuice the fresh root, in combination with, for example, ginger, carrot juice or beet juice.
11. In a stir-fry vegetable mix, for example onion, garlic, peppers, mushrooms, leeks, fresh turmeric. stir-fry for 2-3 minutes, then add rice and fry it together for 2 minutes more. Enjoy your medicines!

Turmeric as a sunscreen

If you do not to eat it, you can use curcumin as a sunscreen. It appears to offer protection from the sun. Scientists call that photo-protector property, so it is protective against the gamma rays of the sun. On the other hand, your tan might be bright yellow.

Turmeric is, in any case, good for the skin. Research shows that it accelerates wound healing. It might be used in case of neglected wounds. There are all kinds of skin-protecting substances in turmeric, which means that damaged skin recovers faster. Therefore, turmeric improves the health of the skin in general.



Become a subscriber of VegaTales.
Read articles about Medicinal Food.
Follow scientific discussions.
Prepare medicinal meals.
Get informed about new studies.
Study traditional medicines,
confirmed by science.

