

Turmeric and Diabetes

Every now and then we hear about a common food that contains amazing healing properties. Turmeric is a fine example. Although it is a spice that has been used in Asian medicine for thousands of years, its potential to cure disease has been largely ignored in the West. Now we are told it can be used to treat a whole list of ailments from diarrhea to diabetes, and scientific tests are beginning to back up these claims.

What is Turmeric?

The turmeric plant, a member of the Zingiberaceae or ginger family, is native to Southeast Asia. Like ginger, the rhizome, or root, is the source of the spice. The turmeric root looks much like ginger root except for its color. While ginger is white, turmeric is orange, so orange, it was used as a dye before it was used for medicinal purposes.

If you've never bought turmeric, you may not realize you've eaten it. Chances are, you have. It is the main spice in curries, the spice that gives curry powders an orange color.

Related: *Foods, Vitamins, and Herbs That Kill Cancer*

What Does Turmeric Contain That Aids in Healing?

Curcumin has been identified as turmeric's source of healing properties. Curcumin is both an anti-inflammatory and a strong anti-oxidant. It prevents inflammation and reduces chronic inflammation. It has also been found to induce apoptosis (cell death) in cancer and pre-cancer cells.

What is Turmeric Used to Treat?

According to Web M.D., turmeric is used internally to treat the following:

- Arthritis
- Heartburn (dyspepsia)
- Joint pain
- Stomach pain
- Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis
- Bypass surgery
- Hemorrhage
- Diarrhea
- Intestinal gas
- Stomach bloating
- Loss of appetite
- Jaundice
- Liver problems
- Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) infection
- Stomach ulcers
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Gallbladder disorders
- High cholesterol
- Lichen planus
- Skin inflammation from radiation treatment,
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Bronchitis
- Colds
- Lung infections
- Fibromyalgia
- Leprosy
- Fever
- Menstrual problems
- Itchy skin
- Recovery after surgery
- Cancers

- Depression
- Alzheimer's disease
- Swelling in the middle layer of the eye (anterior uveitis)
- Water retention
- Worms
- Lupus
- Urinary bladder inflammation
- Kidney problems
- Soreness inside of the mouth and gum disease.
- Inflammatory bowel disease (used as an enema)
- Diabetes

And is used topically to treat:

- Pain
- Ringworm
- Sprains and swellings
- Bruising
- Leech bites
- Eye infections
- Acne
- Inflammatory skin conditions and skin sores
- Infected wounds

Related: *What Causes Chronic Inflammation, and How To Stop It For Good*

Turmeric and Diabetes

If you google turmeric or curcumin, you will find statements denouncing its benefits. It is common to find every alternative healthcare claim to be summarily dismissed. On the other hand, it doesn't take much effort to find scholarly articles that show turmeric's health benefits, such as the studies regarding turmeric and diabetes.

Studies have shown turmeric lowers blood sugar levels, repairs

pancreas cells (even benefitting type I diabetics), reverses prediabetes, lowers cholesterol levels, reduces heart risks, protects kidneys, and reduces inflammation and oxidative stress caused by the disease.

Related: *Holistic Guide to Healing the Endocrine System and Balancing Our Hormones*

What is Diabetes?

When we eat, carbohydrates and sugars are broken down into glucose. The pancreas produces the hormone insulin, which allows glucose in the bloodstream to enter the cells. When this process is disrupted because the body cannot make enough insulin or can't utilize the insulin it does make, high levels of glucose remain in the blood and the cells do not receive the glucose they need.

High blood sugar results in damage to blood vessels, to the kidneys, eyes, nerves, and other parts of the body. Healing and circulation may become impaired. Diabetes is also associated with high blood pressure and an increased risk of heart disease and stroke.

According to the American Diabetes Association, 30.3 million Americans or 9.4% of the population have diabetes; 1.25 million (4%) have type 1 diabetes. In 2015, diabetes was rated the 7th leading cause of death in the United States.

Type 1 Diabetes

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease that is usually diagnosed in childhood or young adulthood. The body attacks and destroys the pancreatic cells that make insulin, leaving the pancreas unable to produce sufficient amounts of insulin, if any at all. The treatment for type 1 diabetes is lifelong insulin therapy – injected insulin – along with diet and exercise management.

Gestational Diabetes

Gestational diabetes occurs during pregnancy. It is believed that hormones from the placenta create insulin resistance, causing the mother to need as much as 3 times the usual amount of insulin. The CDC estimates gestation diabetes occurs in about 9.2% of pregnancies.

Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is also caused by insulin resistance. Since the cells don't respond correctly to insulin, the pancreas overproduces insulin to compensate. Over time, the pancreas is unable to provide enough insulin.

Prediabetes

Prediabetes is diagnosed when blood sugar is abnormally high but not yet high enough to be considered diabetes. These elevated levels of blood sugar can still cause damage to the body.

Curcumin, Prediabetes, and Type 2 Diabetes

In a study conducted in 2012, 240 pre-diabetic patients were randomly chosen to receive either curcumin or placebo capsules. By the end of the 9-month study, 16.4% of the control group developed type 2 diabetes, while the subjects who received curcumin showed better overall function of the pancreatic cells, and not one patient developed diabetes.

A 2014 study that reviewed articles published from 1998 to 2013 in PubMed concluded that curcumin can reduce blood glucose levels, stimulate glucose uptake, stimulate insulin secretion, improve pancreatic cell function, and reduce insulin resistance.

Although most of the positive reports involve prediabetes and type 2 diabetes, some studies are also showing improvements in the pancreas tissue of patients with type I diabetes.

Related: *How to Optimize Curcumin Absorption – With Golden Milk Tea Recipe*

Warnings

There are a few warnings about regular or daily use of turmeric for medicinal purposes. Extreme amounts taken on a daily basis may cause problems with the liver. Keep in mind that turmeric really does work to reduce blood sugar levels. Do not use it medicinally along with medication to reduce blood sugar. The result may be hypoglycemia – low blood sugar.

For excellent detail regarding dosage and interactions, check out *Turmeric Dosage for Diabetics*. The entire site, Turmeric for Health, is filled with useful information, including recipes.

To learn more about healthy absorption of turmeric and a delicious way to consume it, read *How To Optimize Curcumin Absorption – With Golden Milk Tea Recipe*. To increase absorption of curcumin, always add a pinch of black pepper. There is evidence that garlic also increases absorption.

Conclusion

There is abundant evidence proving turmeric can prevent type 2 diabetes and aid in managing or reversing the disease. Remember, the smart way to manage or prevent late onset diabetes is through diet and exercise, not by simply adding supplements or medications to your daily routine. But turmeric can certainly be a healthy part of your diet plan as well as a supplemental aid, without the side effects of pharmaceuticals.

Recommended Reading:

- *Holistic Guide to Healing the Endocrine System and Balancing Our Hormones*
- *Cinnamon – Ceylon Vs Cassia, Health Benefits, and Other Interesting Facts*
- *The Amazing Herbal Power of Ginger*
- *Gluten, Candida, Leaky Gut Syndrome, and Autoimmune Diseases*
- *Hypothyroidism – Natural Remedies, Causes, and How To Heal the Thyroid*
- *Total Nutrition – Make your own Homemade Multivitamin and Mineral Formula*

Sources:

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- *Statistics About Diabetes – American Diabetes Association*
- *Curcumin Extract for Prevention of Type 2 Diabetes – Diabetes Care*
- *Anti-hyperglycemic and insulin sensitizer effects of turmeric and its principle constituent curcumin. – Int J Endocrinol Metab. 2014 Oct 1;12(4)*
- *Why All Diabetics Should Know About Turmeric – The Food Revolution Network*
- *12 Benefits Of Turmeric In Diabetes – Turmeric for Health*
- *Turmeric Dosage For Diabetes – Turmeric for Health*