

Study Shows Curcumin Boosts Mood and Memory in People with Age-Related Memory Loss

Curcumin, the chemical that gives turmeric its vivid yellow hue, produced significant improvements in mood, memory, and attention for people aged 50 to 90, according to a new study published in the American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry. Let's face it – there's a reason turmeric makes it onto every list of healthy foods ever. The director of geriatric psychiatry at UCLA's Longevity Center and the study's first author, Dr. Gary Small, says, "Exactly how curcumin exerts its effects is not certain, but it may be due to its ability to reduce brain inflammation, which has been linked to both Alzheimer's disease and major depression..."

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Why Is Turmeric So Awesome?

Curcumin has a multitude of health benefits. The herb is a powerful anti-inflammatory, but it also detoxes the liver, reduces negative effects of iron overload, increases antioxidant capacity in the body, regenerates brain cells and improves cognitive function, lowers heart disease risk, reduces depression, and combats premature aging. Other studies have also found curcumin to be effective in treating cancer, targeting tumor cells while leaving normal cells alone.

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Bioavailability Matters

Curcumin helps the liver, but that organ also keeps the body from absorbing too much of it. With turmeric, the method of delivery is more important than how much of it you take. Just taking a supplement is not as effective as it could be. Luckily, there are a few ways around that.

The easiest way to absorb more curcumin is to eat it with black pepper. An alkaloid in black pepper, piperine, keeps the body from dumping what it believes to be excess curcumin. A small amount of piperine can increase curcumin absorption by 2,000 percent or more. The combination is also ridiculously easy to find or make, especially in curry spice mixes. Piperine and Bioperine are also good things to look for in a curcumin supplement. Look for a product with them to give your body a better chance of absorbing beneficial nutrients.

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Also a smart play? Beneficial fats. Curcumin doesn't dissolve properly without fat. That makes it less likely to be absorbed into the bloodstream and distributed throughout the body. Popular, healthy options include coconut oil, ghee, avocado, and olive oil (though not for cooking at high temperatures).

Worth It

Recommendations to consume curcumin are firmly rooted in science. New studies like this one are readily available and becoming more frequent. But for practical applications, there is nothing like taking a page from traditions.

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Turmeric and curry are staples of cuisine in India. It's regularly consumed with pepper in spice mixes and ghee, a healthy fat that lowers the risk of heart disease. Perhaps it is no surprise that older people in India have lower levels of

Alzheimer's and cognitive decline.

Sources:

- *Curcumin improves memory and mood, new study says* – University of California
- *How to Optimize Curcumin Absorption – With Golden Milk Tea Recipe* – Organic Lifestyle Magazine
- *Curcumin and Cancer Cells: How Many Ways Can Curry Kill Tumor Cells Selectively?* – NCBI