Turmeric’s Anti-inflammatory Properties Explained

Have you heard of curcumin? It’s the naturally occurring, healing compound in the root of the turmeric plant, and it is one of the most powerful antioxidants available via Mother Nature.

What Is The Oxidation Process And Why Do We Need To Guard Against It?

The oxidation process is a the chemical reaction that causes damage to the cells in your body; it is a fancy phrase for oxygen being metabolised. This metabolic process produces free radicals. Think in terms of a peeled apple going brown when exposed to oxygen in the air. That’s what is happening to our cells during the oxidation process.

Free radicals roam around the body stealing electrons from other molecules, causing damage to cell membranes, tampering with DNA, inflammation and premature cell death.

Antioxidants Scavenge For Free Radicals

Exposure of the body to an oxidated and therefore stressful environment challenges the survival odds of all cells and increases the risk of chronic disease developing. Antioxidants are our friends. The slowing down of the oxidation process is the job of the antioxidants. They chase after, and kill off excess free radicals. The antioxidants slow down the oxidation process by stopping the theft of electrons from cells, thereby allowing the cells to function in a healthy manner.

Our modern world is full of foods and toxins that encourage

the oxidation process, so we need a daily dose of antioxidants to protect our bodies and our minds.

What Are Polyphenols and Why Are They Important?

Curcumin is one of a few oily, lipophilic polyphenols. These are the primary helpers in the antioxidant healing process offered by turmeric. Polyphenols help protect against diabetes, infections, asthma, cancer, hypertension, and ageing.

Polyphenols protect our bodies against many stress-induced toxic states, through regulating intercellular cascades, which inhibit the formation of free radicals and nuclear damage and send the antioxidant enzymes into action.

“Epidemiological studies and associated meta-analyses strongly suggest that long-term consumption of diets rich in plant polyphenols offer protection against development of cancers, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, osteoporosis and neurodegenerative diseases.” – Panday and Rizvi (See first resource below.)

How To Dose With Curcumin

While I am an advocate for always using fresh plant matter for remedies, it’s hard to grow enough turmeric to get a daily ongoing dose. So as a last resort, I buy the organic powdered form and sprinkle on my mashed potatoes. Yum!

Curcumin Adult Dosage

- Fresh cut root: 1.5 to 3 g per day
- Dried, powdered root: 1 to 3 g per day
- Standardized powder (curcumin): 400 to 600 mg, 3 times per day

- Fluid extract (1:1) 30 to 90 drops a day
- Tincture (1:2): 15 to 30 drops, 4 times per day” – University of Maryland Medical Center Website

Curcumin and Pineapple

Eat pineapple with your turmeric because the bromelain in the pines increases the absorption and raises the anti-inflammatory effects of turmeric. Pineapple and turmeric in your smoothie perhaps?

Can Turmeric Be Unsafe?

Recommended doses of turmeric/curcumin supplements are considered safe; however, taking large amounts of turmeric for long periods of time may cause stomach upset and if left untreated, may cause ulcers. People who have gallstones or bile passage obstructions should talk to their doctor and do their research before taking turmeric. Like any new remedy, start slowly and build up the dosage.

It’s unwise if you have diabetes, to start taking turmeric supplements before talking to your doctor. Turmeric may considerably lower your blood sugar levels. When combined with medications for diabetes, turmeric could cause hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). Although it is safe to eat foods with turmeric, supplements are considered UNsafe for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Due to the blood thinning effect that turmeric may induce, you should stop taking it at least 2 weeks before surgery. Tell your doctor and surgeon that you have been taking turmeric. Turmeric may strengthen the effects of blood-thinning medications, raising the risk of bleeding. Blood thinners include warfarin (Coumadin), clopidogrel (Plavix), and aspirin, among others. Turmeric may interfere with the action of stomach acid reducing drugs, increasing the overall production of stomach acid.

If you are taking any of these drugs, turmeric/curcumin is NOT recommended:

- Cimetidine (Tagamet)
- Famotidine (Pepcid)
- Ranitidine (Zantac)
- Esomeprazole (Nexium)
- Omeprazole (Prilosec)
- Lansoprazole (Prevacid)

Conclusion

If you like the idea of using it to reduce inflammation naturally, get going on it today. I have been using fresh turmeric to fight inflammation and it flat out works. Why not source a few organic pieces and grow a pot of your own to enjoy?

To learn more about natural ways to reduce inflammation, check out Welcome To The Wonderful World of…Natural Inflammatory Relief.

Recommended Reading:

- *What Causes Chronic Inflammation, and How To Stop It For Good*
- *How to Optimize Curcumin Absorption – With Golden Milk Tea Recipe*
- *Foods, Vitamins, and Herbs That Kill Cancer*
- *Garlic – The Most Amazing Herb On The Planet*

Sources

- *Plant polyphenols as dietary antioxidants in human health and disease* – US National Library of Medicine
- *Turmeric* – University of Maryland Medical Centre