

Tumeric 'tərmərik/

SPICE IT UP AGAIN WITH JEN

TURMERIC!!!! Sorry, didn't mean to shout, just so excited. Ok, not that excited, but it is still pretty cool. What is so great about turmeric?

Turmeric is a common spice that comes from the root *Curcuma Longa*. It has been used in India for thousands of years and gives curry its yellow color. It is used for both cooking and medicinal purposes. Recently, turmeric has been shown to have many biological properties that can enhance overall health. Cooking with the spice offers great flavor along with the potential health benefits.

So what are the health benefits to using turmeric in our cooking? Turmeric contains curcumin which is the main active ingredient and a natural anti-inflammatory compound. Chronic inflammation has been linked to certain cancers, arthritis, Alzheimer's disease, as well as heart disease. It is thought that turmeric added to your diet could help prevent these conditions. Curcumin has also been shown to increase the body's antioxidant capacity. This could increase the body's ability to fight certain diseases, as well as slow the aging process. Curcumin has also been shown to boost brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) in animal studies. BDNF is a protein responsible for nerve growth, memory and learning. This could delay or even reverse some brain diseases and age related diseases in brain function. ([see article](#))

Despite the potential risk of taking Turmeric as a supplement there are still benefits with the spice. Adding Turmeric to your cooking is an excellent way to spice up your diet as well as provide some potential health benefits. It is such an easy way to take charge of your health. Every bit counts. Remember, a healthy lifestyle is just that, a lifestyle. It is a way of life; not a moment in time. So go spice it up!



WHAT IS SAFE: Ok, Jen, so what's the rub? There really isn't any if you are adding the spice to your dinner. Great taste with added benefits, but the truth is many of the benefits seen with turmeric, or more specifically curcumin have been in animal studies and at much larger amounts than what is used in cooking. Therefore, the new trend is to take a Turmeric supplement. **I DO NOT recommend taking any supplements without talking to your doctor first.** Turmeric has been shown to react with certain medications. Also, curcumin is poorly absorbed in the body. To increase that bioavailability many supplements have added black pepper. Black pepper has been shown to increase the bioavailability of curcumin. Curcumin at high doses (the doses need to obtain health benefits) can cause digestive issues, including diarrhea. To offset this many supplements have added ginger. Besides digestive issues, curcumin could also cause kidney stones in susceptible people, may affect iron absorption, and does thin the blood. This would not be recommended for those on blood thinners. ([See article](#))