



## Turmeric/Curcumin

1. Turmeric (*curcuma longa*), a relative of ginger, is a spice used commonly in India. It is what gives curry and American yellow mustard their yellow color. The underground part known as a rhizome is what is used for spice and medicine.
2. "Curcumin" is the term for a number of related compounds referred to as curuminoids. These have powerful anti-inflammatory properties. Studies have shown possible benefits for arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, asthma, psoriasis, and prevention of colon cancer.
3. 1000mg of dried, ground turmeric contains about 60mg of curcumin. Average daily consumption of turmeric in India is 1-2 grams daily (60-100mg curcumin). You would have to eat 15-18 teaspoons of turmeric daily to get the amounts of curcumin that have been shown to help health conditions.
4. Products that have been studied and are sold in this country are highly concentrated and generally standardized to 95% curcumin. Dosing for most problems is 400mg -700mg of curcumin three times daily.
5. Curcumin by itself is poorly absorbed from the gastrointestinal tract. If you are taking curcumin to support arthritis, psoriasis, or asthma:
  - a. Take it on a full stomach with a fatty meal
  - b. Take a product that contains piperine (an extract of black pepper), phosphatidyl choline (common proprietary name "Meriva") or other absorption enhancer.
  - c. Curcumin is commonly mixed with other anti-inflammatory supplements such as boswellia, ginger, and bromelain. These may or may not enhance curcumin's effectiveness.
6. If you are taking curcumin to support gastrointestinal problems like inflammatory bowel disease (ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease) or for its colorectal cancer prevention properties:
  - a. Take on empty stomach in between meals.
  - b. Make sure your product does not have the above absorption enhancers.
7. Curcumin can stimulate the gall bladder so use caution if you have gallstones or other gall bladder problems. In some people it may cause heartburn or stomach upset.
8. Curcumin may cause uterine contractions and should not be used in pregnancy. It has not been studied in breast feeding.
9. Curcumin may interact with blood thinners and other anti-inflammatory medications like ibuprofen, naproxen, aspirin, etc. Check with your health care professional if you are on other medications. Stop curcumin containing products a week or two before surgery.