

Turmeric: Spice up your life

Turmeric has long been used for cooking and traditional medicine, but this relative of ginger with its vivid yellow-orange colour has recently emerged as a highly popular natural supplement to promote health and wellbeing.



Turmeric gets its distinctive yellow colour from curcumin, which is also the active compound credited with most of turmeric's health benefits. Studies have, however, shown that turmeric and its ingredient curcumin has a relatively low absorption rate: Most of the curcumin is absorbed directly into the lining of the liver and stomach wall as opposed to the bloodstream. This means it is critical to boost absorption by, for instance, cooking turmeric with oil. Doing this could help your body absorb more curcumin, since it is more easily absorbed by the gut when curcumin binds with fat.

Benefits of turmeric

Combating the effects of inflammation

Curcumin is known to have anti-inflammatory properties and is regarded as a potentially effective treatment for inflammatory conditions such as arthritis, providing relief from aggravated joints. The Arthritis Foundation suggests taking turmeric capsules of 400 mg to 600 mg up to three times per day for relief of inflammation.

A potent antioxidant

Free radicals (highly reactive molecules) can cause oxidative damage – thought to be one of the mechanisms behind ageing and numerous diseases. Curcumin is a powerful antioxidant that can neutralise free radicals by both blocking them and stimulating your body's own antioxidant defences.

Helping maintain good brain health

The brain hormone BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor) is a main driver of the brain that is able to increase its number of neurons. A decrease in BDNF has been linked to brain disorders such as Alzheimer's disease. Curcumin can increase the brain's levels of BDNF and may be able to assist in reversing some brain diseases and age-related decreases in brain function.