7 TIPS FOR TAKING TURMERIC

You know its golden hue — it's what gives mustard and curry their vibrant yellow color. But the reason this ancient spice is suddenly popping up in everything from teas to smoothies? Turmeric's treasure lies in its active ingredient: CURCUMIN.

WHAT'S IT GOOD FOR?

Traditional Chinese medicine and Ayurveda have long used turmeric to improve digestion and liver function, ease arthritis pain and regulate menstrual cycles. Curcumin is reported to be rich in antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties. Today, researchers are investigating whether turmeric may help diseases in which inflammation plays a role, ranging from arthritis to ulcerative colitis.

SOURCES

[1] clevelandclinicwellness.com/Features/Pages/Turmeric.aspx

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HOW SHOULD I TAKE IT?

Turmeric can be taken as a supplement to complement your regular healthcare regimen. Please check with your doctor first to see if turmeric is right for you. If you and your doctor agree, follow these 7 tips.

1. Look for “phytosome technology.” Check the label for a product manufactured with “phytosome technology” (or Meriva®, turmeric). Combining phosphatidylcholine with the curcumin results in a 29X improved absorption rate over standard curcumin extracts.

2. Check your dose. While taking 500 mg twice daily with food is commonly recommended, know there’s no one set amount for everyone. The dose that’s right for you depends on your overall health. More isn’t always better, so talk to your doctor.

3. Start low and build up. While most people tolerate turmeric very well, allergy or intolerance is possible, as is a bit of GI upset. If you have a target dose in mind, start at the lowest dose and work your way up.

4. Being picky pays off. The quality of the raw materials does make a difference. Look for authentic Indian turmeric for cooking. For supplements, find a product with as few inactive ingredients/fillers as possible.

5. Don’t stock up. With both supplements and spices, buy just enough. Then replenish your supply. Its power is depleted by being repeatedly exposed to air.

6. Don’t stop your medicines. Taking or eating turmeric is NOT a substitute for medicine. It can be helpful as a supplement, or adjunct to, your conventional care.

7. Listen to your body. While the risk of side effects is low and drug interactions are unlikely, stop taking turmeric if you notice ill effects. Turmeric may cause bloating and there is a theoretical concern that it may interact with blood-clotting medications. Avoid it if you have gallbladder disease.

Not ready to commit to a supplement? While cooking with turmeric doesn’t give you as big of a health boost as taking a supplement, you can still benefit by adding this pungent, bitter spice to smoothies, soups, scrambled eggs, muffins, rice and roasted veggies.