

## COOL AS CURCUMIN

By Shari Barbanel

Used for thousands of years in Asia as a spice, food coloring and medicinal herb, turmeric (*Curcuma longa* L.) is also known as Zohara turmeric, turmeric long, Indian turmeric, as well as Indian saffron, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Turmeric is cultivated in many countries with a tropical climate, which is favorable to the growth of the plant. Turmeric contains a number of compounds with medicinal properties called curcuminoids.

Curcumin is the main active compound in turmeric, and was traditionally used for indigestion, flatulence and diarrhea, as well as an anti-inflammatory. Today it is well known for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects. There have been a number of studies on curcumin that have researched its wide range of benefits.

In fact, in a 2017 study that was published in the *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) examined the effects of an easily absorbed curcumin supplement on memory performance in people without dementia, as well as curcumin's potential impact on the microscopic plaques and tangles in the brains of people with Alzheimer's disease.

The double-blind, placebo-controlled study involved 40 adults between the ages of 50 and 90 years who had mild memory complaints. Participants were randomly assigned to receive either a placebo or 90 milligrams of curcumin twice daily for 18 months.

According to the researchers, the people who took curcumin experienced significant improvements in their memory and attention abilities, while the subjects who received placebo did not. In memory tests, the people taking curcumin improved by 28 percent over the 18 months. Those taking curcumin also had mild improvements in mood, and their brain PET scans showed significantly less amyloid and tau

signals in the amygdala and hypothalamus than those who took placebos.

Another study published in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, researchers at Vanderbilt University Medical Center found that a close chemical analog of curcumin has properties that may make it useful as a treatment for the brain disease.

"Curcumin has demonstrated ability to enter the brain, bind and destroy the beta-amyloid plaques present in Alzheimer's with reduced toxicity," said Wellington Pham, PhD, assistant professor of Radiology and Radiological Sciences and Biomedical Engineering at Vanderbilt and senior author of the study.

Curcumin is also being studied for its benefits when used topically. In a study published in 2017 in the journal *BioDiscovery*, Dr. Madalene Heng, Clinical Professor of Dermatology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and researchers found that the use of topical curcumin gel for treating skin problems, like burns and scalds, is very different, and appears to work more effectively, when compared to taking curcumin tablets by mouth for other conditions.

In this study, use of curcumin after burns and scalds were found to reduce the severity of the injury, lessen pain and inflammation, and improve healing with less than expected scarring, or even no scarring, of the affected skin. The researchers reported that topical curcumin gel applied soon after mild to moderate burns and scalds appears to be remarkably effective in relieving symptoms and improved healing of the affected skin.

"Curcumin gel appears to work much better when used on the skin because the gel preparation allows curcumin to penetrate the skin, inhibit phosphatase kinase and reduce inflammation," explained Heng. **VR**

### References:

Livestrong.com  
Nih.gov

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF CURCUMIN



1.) Turmeric is also known as \_\_\_\_\_.

- a.) Indian saffron
- b.) *Curcuma longa* L.
- c.) Zohara turmeric
- d.) all of the above

2.) Turmeric contains a number of compounds with medicinal properties called curcuminoids.

- a.) True
- b.) False

3.) In a 2018 study that was published in the *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, memory tests, the people taking curcumin improved by \_\_\_\_\_ percent over \_\_\_\_\_ months.

- a.) 18; 28
- b.) 82; 18
- c.) 28; 18
- d.) none of the above

4.) According to study published in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, researchers at Vanderbilt University Medical Center found that a close chemical analog of curcumin has properties that may make it useful as a treatment for.

- a.) IBS
- b.) brain disease
- c.) IBD
- d.) none of the above

5.) In 2017 in the journal *BioDiscovery*, researchers at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA found that the use of use of topical curcumin gel for treating skin problems, like \_\_\_\_\_, is very different, and appears to work more effectively, when compared to taking curcumin tablets by mouth for other conditions.

- a.) burns
- b.) scalds
- c.) both a & b
- d.) none of the above

ANSWERS: 1) D 2) A 3) C 4) B 5) C

Copy and print this section of 'Healthy Shopper' or visit [www.VitaminRetailer.com/HealthyShopper](http://www.VitaminRetailer.com/HealthyShopper) to print out the pdf version for your customers. 'Healthy Shopper' is provided for educational purposes only.

No part of this article is intended as medical advice. Always consult your health care provider for any medical problems.