

G IS FOR GARLIC

By Shari Barbanel

Also known as the “stinking rose,” garlic (*Allium sativum*) is a plant in the onion family. Garlic is rich in vitamin C, and also contains vitamin B6, selenium, fiber and manganese, among other nutritionists. According to Healthline, many of garlic’s health benefits come from the sulfur compounds that are formed when garlic is chopped, crushed or chewed. Among the most well-known sulfur compounds in garlic are allicin, diallyl disulfide and S-allyl cysteine.

Garlic has been utilized for a number of health issues for centuries. According to Penn State, *The Codex Ebers*, an Ancient Egyptian medical text explained that garlic was used as a remedy for skin diseases, poisoning, heart problems and tumors. Garlic cloves were even found preserved in King Tut’s tomb. Hippocrates prescribed garlic for protecting the skin, and Greek athletes ate it before competing in the first Olympic Games. And in ancient China and Japan, garlic was thought to provide energy, lift depression and improve male potency, and it was used in India to treat arthritis and leprosy.

Today, garlic is known for its benefits for heart health, the immune system and its anti-inflammatory properties, among others.

One study, published in 2016 in *The Journal of Nutrition* found that aged garlic extract (AGE) can aid in boosting the immune system. The researchers found that people who took AGE for three months during cold and flu season missed fewer days of school and/or work, in addition to experiencing milder symptoms.

And in a review of studies that was published in 2020 in the journal *Experimental and Therapeutic Medicine*, researchers found that taking garlic supplements helped to reduce the blood pressure of participants with high blood

pressure. The researchers linked this to a 16 to 40 percent lower risk of experiencing cardiovascular events, according to Healthline.

Further, according to a 2018 study review, published in the journal *Medicine*, garlic can help lower LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol, which is also known as “bad” cholesterol.

Research even shows that consuming garlic may help reduce aging-related memory problems. Researchers at the University of Louisville gave oral allyl sulfide, a compound in garlic, to mice that were 24 months old, which correlates to people between 56 and 69 years of age. They compared these mice with 4- and 24-month-old mice not receiving the dietary allyl sulfide supplement.

The researchers observed that the older mice receiving the garlic compound showed better long- and short-term memory and healthier gut bacteria than the older mice that didn’t receive the treatment. Spatial memory was also impaired in the 24-month-old mice not receiving allyl sulfide.

“Our findings suggest that dietary administration of garlic containing allyl sulfide could help maintain healthy gut microorganisms and improve cognitive health in the elderly,” said Jyotirmaya Behera, PhD, who lead the research team with Neetu Tyagi, PhD.

According to the WebMD, garlic is most often used by adults in dose of 2,400 mg orally per day for 12 months. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) reported that those taking an anticoagulant should speak to a health care provider before taking garlic, as it may increase bleeding. Pregnant and breastfeeding women should also speak to a health care provider before taking garlic. **VR**

References:

Healthline.com
Nih.gov
Psu.edu

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF GARLIC



1.) Garlic contains which of the following vitamins and minerals?.

- a.) vitamin C b.) fiber
c.) selenium d.) all of the above

2.) According to *The Codex Ebers*, an Ancient Egyptian medical text, garlic was used as a remedy for skin diseases, poisoning, heart problems and tumors.

- a.) true b.) false

3.) According to a 2018 study review, published in the journal *Medicine*, garlic can help lower _____ cholesterol, which is also known as “bad” cholesterol.

- a.) HDL b.) LDH
c.) LDL d.) none of the above

4.) In a mouse study, researchers at the University of Louisville found that giving oral allyl sulfide to older mice showed _____ than the older mice that didn’t receive the treatment.

- a.) healthier gut bacteria b.) better short-term memory
c.) better long-term memory d.) all of the above

5.) According to the WebMD, garlic is most often used by adults in dose of _____ orally per day for 12 months.

- a.) 2,400 g b.) 2,400 mg
c.) 240 mg d.) 24 g

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

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