

Curcumin (*Tumeric*)

Curcumin is an ingredient of the turmeric spice. It has numerous health benefits that have been recognized for centuries in India. It reduces inflammation and helps protect brain cells. Over six controlled studies have found it helpful in depression and anxiety, particularly in middle-aged people. In one study, its benefits were comparable to those of the popular antidepressant fluoxetine (Prozac).

Another study found it improved memory concentration and mood in older adults. Curcumin reduces amyloid plaques in the brain, a benefit that may help prevent dementia.

On the medical side, small studies suggest it may help arthritis, indigestion, ulcerative colitis, itch, dyslipidemia (high cholesterol), high blood pressure and diabetes.

Curcumin is found in curry and mustard, but for medicinal uses is taken in capsules or tablets. The dose used for depression is 1,000mg daily (start at a lower dose for the first week, such as 500mg or as close as you can get to that. Note that 1,000mg = 1 gram).

Some products add black pepper extract (Bioperine) to curcumin. This improves the absorption of curcumin in the stomach so that approximately 50% more is absorbed.

Side effects

Curcumin usually does not cause significant side effects; however, some people can experience stomach upset, nausea, dizziness, or diarrhea. Like omega-3 fatty acids (fish oil), it may need to be stopped before surgery as it can increase bleed-time. Curcumin may have estrogen-like effects that would pose risks if you've had a hormone-sensitive condition such as breast cancer, uterine cancer, ovarian cancer, endometriosis, or uterine fibroids.



Curcumin contains oxalate which increases the risk of kidney stones particularly in people sensitive to oxalate stones. Other healthy foods that can increase that risk include dark chocolate, tea, berries, and nuts. For a thorough list of high oxalate foods see:

<https://regepi.bwh.harvard.edu/health/Oxalate/files>

Staying well hydrated can reduce the risk of renal stones.








How to purchase and take it


Curcumin is available on amazon.com, drugstore.com and may be sold at local pharmacy or health stores. Look for products labeled "BCM-95" or "95% curcuminoids." Recommended options are on the back.

–Updated 8/22/2017 by Chris Aiken, MD

Curcumin on Amazon

The products below all have the right ingredients. They are listed in order of price on Amazon.com. The daily dose is the number of capsules based on 1,000mg/day (please double check the label after purchasing to make sure you are taking at least 1,000mg/day – sometimes labels change).

Brand	mg	# Caps	Price	Daily Dose	Daily Price	ASIN (use to look up on Amazon)
Best overall option:						
Vitacost C3 & Bioperine 	1160	120	\$17.85	2	\$0.25	B0046509XO
Jarrow Formulas 	500	120	\$17.88	2	\$0.34	B0013OVSUS
Doctor's Best C3 & BioPerine 	1000	120	\$41.03	1	\$0.34	B001J9K5PG
Now Curcumin 	665	60	\$14.99	1.5 [†]	\$0.37	B0013OXD3I
Nutrigold & BioPerine 	500	120	\$34.23	2	\$0.57	B0055713UO
LifeExtension Super Bio 	400	60	\$20.50	2.5 [†]	\$0.85	B00WAL288O
Progressive Labs Curcumin 	400	60	\$26.08	2.5 [†]	\$1.09	B004HWP2AU

 Approved by consumerlab.com for purity and accuracy in labeling. The following brands were *not* approved: Advanced Physician Formulas, Eclectic Institute.

[†] If the daily dose is 2.5, take 2 every other day and 3 every other day; if it's 1.5 take 1 every other day and 2 every other day.

