

Curry spice, curcumin, helps against diabetes

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As the snowy cold weather begins to roll into Colorado, I crave warmer, heartier meals like chili, stews and brisket. Juicing kale and celery when it's 4 degrees outside doesn't cut it. So at this time of year, garlic and curry go in everything I eat.

Let's talk curry today. Penang, red or green curry, it's all good with me! Curry sounds like it's one spice, but it's actually a blend of spices, and it always contains some turmeric.

Turmeric comes from the ginger family. This yellow-orange spice was first used as a dye until its medicinal properties were discovered. Our research today proves turmeric positively benefits hundreds of health conditions, making it a healthy and tasty sprinkle for any dish. Do I want it right now? Yes, please!

You can buy the spice called turmeric all by itself if you don't like curry. Supplements of turmeric are sold everywhere. And you'll also find 'curcumin,' which is one potent extract of turmeric.

Curcumin may prevent or improve age-related cognitive decline, dementia and mood disorders. This is not wishful thinking; It's true. A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial observed 60 adults between the ages of 60 and 85. After about one hour of their curcumin dose, these adults enjoyed a higher attention span and better memory than those who swallowed the placebo. After four weeks of curcumin supplements, memory, mood, alertness, and contentedness were considerably better in the participants.

Curcumin is a hot supplement; not spicy hot, but "hot" in the sense that research is conducted frequently. I found more than 900 published research papers pertaining to curcumin's anti-cancer activity. One of these papers found that curcumin has the ability to make some cancer cells commit suicide. Basically, curcumin programs the cell to die! That's a good thing, you want those cancer cells to go bye-bye! Technically, we call this "apoptosis." Cancers that are resistant to multiple chemotherapeutic agents seem to still respond to curcumin, at least in mouse studies. Because of curcumin's long-term record of safety and low risk of side effects, I think it's a great natural adjunct to many protocols, especially for breast and prostate cancer. It's a strong anti-inflammatory.

Type 2 diabetes has reached epidemic proportions. Diabetes Care, the journal of the American Diabetes Association, published a study about curcumin's ability to prevent pre-diabetic patients from becoming full-blown diabetics. Results after nine months showed 100 percent success! No one progressed. Further, curcumin-treated patients had better pancreatic beta cell function and higher adiponectin. Excellent! You know, I'm a pharmacist and I'll tell you there isn't one drug behind the counter that competes.

Curcumin is the 'Kardashian' of herbs. It's spicy, notorious, and a little goes a long way if you know what I mean. Too much is not good, it's a laxative. Most importantly, curry, and curcumin are considered effective and safe by most physicians. I'd ask about supplementing with it if you have inflammatory conditions, especially autoimmune ones like rheumatoid, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's and psoriasis.