

TURMERIC

Curcuma longa

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Anti-inflammatory
- Antioxidant
- Neuroprotective
- Anticarcinogenic
- Antiproliferative
- Chemopreventive
- Antimutagenic
- Immunomodulator
- Radioprotective
- Hepatoprotective
- Antiulcer
- Hypolipidaemic
- Antiatherogenic
- Analgesic
- Antimicrobial
- Antiviral
- Antifungal
- Nephroprotective
- Antidepressant
- Antiaging
- Lavicidal
- Insecticidal

Indications

- Adjunctive cancer treatment, chemoprevention (to reverse, suppress or prevent the development of cancer), chemosensitisation (makes tumour cells more sensitive to chemotherapy).
- Inflammatory conditions such as arthritis, osteoarthritis, Irritable Bowel Disease (IBD), inflammatory bowel disease, asthma, eczema, psoriasis, lupus nephritis.
- Cardiovascular disease prophylaxis, adjunct in the treatment of hyperlipidaemia
- Dyspepsia, peptic ulcer, infections
- Adjunctive diabetes treatment
- Topically for skin conditions, sprains and strains, adjunct in periodontitis

Traditional Use

Since the time of Ayurveda (1900 BC) numerous therapeutic activities have been assigned to turmeric for a wide variety of diseases and conditions, especially anti-inflammatory.

Energetics

Warm, pungent, bitter.

Constituents

Curcuminoids: Yellow to orange pigments, mainly diarylheptanoids, with curcumin (diferuloylmethane or curcumin I), demethoxycurcumin (curcumin II) and bisdemethoxycurcumin (curcumin III) as the main constituents; volatile oil; polysaccharides; calebin A, vanillic acid and vanillin are other phenylpropene and phenolic compounds. Considering the overwhelming evidence showing the weakness of isolated curcumin (almost always a mixture of curcuminoids) as a viable therapeutic, whole extracts of turmeric are favoured.

Use in Pregnancy

When used as a spice turmeric is most likely to be safe however the safety of therapeutic doses has not been established.

Contraindications and Cautions

Contraindicated in patients with obstruction of the bile duct, cholangitis, liver disease, gallstones and any other biliary disease. High doses are probably best avoided in males and females wanting to conceive. Contraindicated when used in patients allergic to turmeric, any of its constituents (including curcumin), certain yellow food colourings or other members of the Zingiberaceae (ginger) family.

Drug Interactions

Caution with dexamethasone (an anti-inflammatory medication), sulphasalazine (a disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drug), tacrolimus (an immunosuppressive drug), talinolol (a beta blocker), anticoagulant/antiplatelet and antidiabetic drugs. Combination may be beneficial with high alcohol ingestion and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:2 in 60% alcohol
35 to 150mL weekly