

Turmeric

I count turmeric as one of the most amazing herbs/spices in my pantry. It's one I wouldn't want to be without. Not only does it impart great flavor to meals and foods, but it's a very handy home remedy for many common illnesses.

More than that, there research is emerging that shows many impressive long-term health benefits turmeric. From cancer prevention to gene repair in metabolic disorders, arthritis, IBS, and much more...turmeric is a spice worth knowing and using! Two notable actions for turmeric are anti-inflammatory, and increasing bile flow, which helps with digestion among other things.

We Use Turmeric Most Often In These Forms:

- Encapsulated, with just a pinch of pepper
- In my homemade honey-lemon cough syrup
- In foods, beverages, marinades and salad dressings



How and Why We Use Turmeric:

- **Headaches:** Turmeric is effective at reducing inflammation, and we've found that 4 capsules of turmeric (with a hint of black pepper) will resolve most of our headaches here. My herbally-skeptical husband now prefers it to Tylenol.
- **Cuts/Bleeding:** Turmeric has styptic properties. This is a common kitchen remedy in India for minor cuts.² We have also stopped bleeding from minor cuts and wounds quickly by dusting them with turmeric powder. I was SO happy to learn this tip, because the only other styptic herb I had heard of was cayenne, and I am a big scardy-cat about hot things in my mouth or on my bleeding wounds. Turmeric doesn't hurt or sting, but it leaves a yellow tinge to your skin.
- **Allergic Reactions:** I'm interested in using turmeric as a histamine mediator for internal and external allergic reactions. I read that in animal studies, "turmeric prevents the release of histamine from mast cells (Molecular Nutrition and Food Research, September 2008). If it works similarly in humans, this would prevent allergy symptoms from developing."³ Now that's worth looking into! I think I would experiment with capsules for this application as well.
- **Muscle Pain From Inflammation:** I recently used a blend of turmeric, powdered hot peppers, coconut oil, peppermint essential oil and spearmint essential oils for a back muscle that has been knotted for weeks. It resolved in three applications, in less than 48 hours! Warning: In India, they use turmeric oil topically before baths, as it is said to 'make your skin glow.' And by 'glow' they mean that your skin will turn neon yellow for a few days. Not such a big deal on a back muscle, but possibly not the best choice for an acne treatment before prom night.
- **Cold and Flu:** "A March 2009 study reported in Emerging Infectious Disease reported that laboratory cells treated with curcumin reduced virus replication by over 90 percent. Curcumin appeared to both decrease the amount of viral replication in infected cells, as well as decrease the number of cells that were infected by the virus to begin with."⁴ Sold. I've found that the earlier you catch the first signs of a cold or flu coming on, the better the results you get with using antiviral herbs. In fact, I'm working on putting together an herbal first aid kit for my husband at work, so he'll always have a supply of turmeric when he needs it. We love the results that we've had in using turmeric for colds in my honey-lemon cough syrup. I also want to try the Turmeric Chai recipes below at the first signs of a cold or flu.
- **Coughing:** Both the inflammation and anti-viral components make turmeric a natural choice as a cough remedy. Many friends have used this, and reported the same thing we've found...turmeric is GREAT for soothing coughs!
- **Minor Burns:** Turmeric is commonly used on burns in India.² In my house, I always, always remove all clothing and treat the area with cool water immediately before treating with anything else. I do think a paste made with turmeric powder and either cold aloe gel a cold pureed cucumber, or just cool water would be very soothing on a burn! See note above on 'glowing' skin.
- **Disease Prevention:** Turmeric shows great promise for long term disease prevention and brain protective properties.⁵ I'm very interested in incorporating it more in our weekly diet in things like salad dressing (it's especially yummy with ginger!), stir fry, stews/soups, curry, etc.

For more ways to use turmeric, recipe ideas and links, read the full article on turmeric at:
<http://www.gwens-nest.com/natural-remedies/turmeric-a-spice-worth-knowing>