

Your Quick Reference Guide for Turmeric

Information provided by: *Natural Medicines Consumer Information and Education*

<https://naturalmedicines.therapeuticresearch.com/databases/food,-herbssupplements/patienthandout.aspx?productid=662&lang-en>



What Is Turmeric?

Turmeric is a spice that comes from the turmeric plant. It is most commonly used in Asian foods and is also a main spice in curries. It has a warm, bitter taste. The root of turmeric is also used widely for medicine. It contains a yellow-colored chemical called curcumin, which is also used to color foods and cosmetics.

Turmeric is used to treat medical conditions such as, but not limited to:

- Arthritis
- Heartburn
- Joint pain
- stomach pain
- Crohn's disease
- Ulcerative colitis
- Diarrhea
- Jaundice
- Liver problems
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Intestinal gas
- Gallbladder disorders
- High cholesterols
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Bronchitis
- Colds
- Lung infections
- Fibromyalgia
- Leprosy
- Fever
- Menstrual problems
- Itchy skin
- Depression
- Alzheimers disease
- Diabetes
- Urinary bladder inflammation
- Kidney problems

Some people apply turmeric to the skin for:

- Pain
- Ringworm
- Sprains and swellings
- Bruising
- Leech bites
- Eye infections
- Acne
- Inflammatory skin conditions and skin sores
- Sores inside the mouth
- Infected wounds, and gum disease.



Is it Effective?

According to *Natural Medicines*, the effectiveness ratings for Turmeric are as follows:

High Cholesterol

Research suggests that taking turmeric extract by mouth twice daily for 3 months reduces cholesterol in overweight people with high cholesterol.

Osteoarthritis

Some research shows that taking turmeric extracts, alone or in combination with other herbal ingredients, can reduce pain and improve function in people with osteoarthritis.

Itching

Research suggests that taking turmeric by mouth three times daily for 8 weeks reduces itching in people with long-term kidney disease.

According to *Natural Medicines*, turmeric is ineffective for **stomach ulcers**.

According to *Natural Medicines*, research shows that there have been insufficient evidence to rate effectiveness for:

- Alzheimer's disease
- Eye inflammation
- Colorectal cancer
- Bypass surgery
- Skin wounds related to cancer
- Crohn's disease
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Stomach upset
- Gum disease
- Stomach ulcers caused by H. pylori
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Joint pain
- Skin rash (Lichen planus)
- Prostate cancer
- Inflammation in the mouth and/or esophagus from radiation treatment
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Recover from surgery
- Lupus erythematosus
- Tuberculosis
- Ulcerative colitis
- Acne

- Jaundice
- Hepatitis
- Diarrhea
- Fibromyalgia
- Liver and gallbladder problems
- Headache
- Menstrual problems
- Pain
- Ringworm
- Bruising
- Other conditions

More evidence is needed to rate turmeric for these uses.

How Does it Work?

Turmeric contains a chemical called curcumin. Curcumin and other chemicals in turmeric might decrease swelling. Because of this, turmeric might be beneficial for treating conditions that involve inflammation.

Are There Safety Concerns?

Turmeric is **LIKELY SAFE** when taken by mouth or applied to the skin appropriately for up to 8 months.

Turmeric is **POSSIBLY SAFE** when used as an enema or a mouthwash in the short-term.

Turmeric usually does not cause significant side effects; however, some people can experience stomach upset, nausea, dizziness, or diarrhea.

Special Precautions & Warnings:

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Turmeric is **LIKELY SAFE** when taken by mouth in amounts commonly found in food. However, turmeric is **LIKELY UNSAFE** when taken by mouth in medicinal amounts during pregnancy. There is not enough information to rate the safety of medicinal amounts of turmeric during breast-feeding. It is best not to use it.

Gallbladder problems

Do not use turmeric if you have gallstones or a bile duct obstruction.

Bleeding problems

Taking turmeric might slow blood clotting. This might increase the risk of bruising and bleeding in people with bleeding disorders.

Diabetes

Curcumin might decrease blood sugar in people with diabetes. Use with caution.

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)

Turmeric can cause stomach upset in some people and make GERD worse. Do not take if it worsens symptoms of GERD.

Hormone-sensitive conditions such as breast cancer, uterine cancer, ovarian cancer, endometriosis, or uterine fibroids

Curcumin may act like a hormone estrogen and may make hormone-sensitive conditions worse. However, research shows that turmeric reduces the effects of estrogen in some hormone-sensitive cancer cells. Until more is known, use cautiously if you have a condition that might be made worse by exposure to hormones.

Infertility

Turmeric might lower testosterone levels and decrease sperm movement when taken by mouth by men.

Iron deficiency

Taking high amounts of turmeric might prevent the absorption of iron.

Surgery

Turmeric might slow blood clotting and cause extra bleeding during and after surgery. Stop using turmeric 2 weeks before a scheduled surgery.