

# Healthy Heart with Curcumin

by L. Stephen Coles, M.D., Ph.D.

Curcumin, the orange spice in turmeric, is gaining worldwide fame for its effective pain relief and cell health. That is because curcumin is a powerful, natural, nontoxic phyto-molecule that can help reduce inflammation. This in turn benefits people not only suffering from arthritis and muscle pain but anyone seeking to support heart health as well. This means when you take a quality curcumin supplement, or consume foods such as curries that are rich in curcumin, you receive a multitude of health benefits far beyond pain relief.

Writing in the April 3, 2009, issue of the *International Journal of Cardiology*, researchers say that curcumin offers protection against drug-induced heart toxicity and “may prevent diabetic cardiovascular complications.” Known technically as a polyphenol, curcumin has anti-inflammatory effects, and can help to keep red blood cells from forming abnormal clots, which increases risk of thrombosis. By “decreasing the serum cholesterol level, curcumin may protect against the pathological changes occurring with atherosclerosis.”

In the February 2008 edition of the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, researchers at the Peter Munk Cardiac Centre of the Toronto General Hospital reported that curcumin may *dramatically* reduce the chance of developing heart failure. “When the herb is given orally, it can actually prevent and reverse hypertrophy, restore heart function, and reduce scar formation.”

Curcumin molecules, when properly absorbed, enter the cell nucleus, beneficially turning on and off gene switches, preventing abnormal unraveling of the chromosome under stress, and preventing excessive abnormal protein production. This helps to minimize plaque growth, just as it minimizes damaged cell division.

“Curcumin’s ability to shut off one of the major switches right at the chromosome source where the enlargement and scarring genes are being turned on is impressive,” says Dr. Peter Liu, cardiologist in the Peter Munk Cardiac Centre and Scientific Director at the Canadian Institutes of Health Research—Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health. Dr. Liu, who holds the Heart and Stroke Foundation’s Polo Chair Professor in Medicine and Physiology at the University of Toronto, says that since curcumin is a naturally occurring compound, it is readily available at a low cost, it might be a safe and effective means of preventing heart failure in the future.

## MY RECOMMENDATION

I believe that supplementing your diet with curcumin is profoundly beneficial. But I have long been concerned, as have other experts, about the poor bioavailability of supplements.

Fortunately, in my research, I have learned about a type of curcuminoid-rich extract known as BCM-95® and of all the products tested, it is the one that sustained the highest levels of curcumin in the bloodstream. The natural medicine company EuroPharma makes Curamin® and Curacel™, which are what I recommend for pain and longevity.

For pain, I generally recommend Curamin. It combines BCM-95 with boswellia, also known as frankincense, in a powerful Ayurvedic preparation. But for sheer longevity potential, I very much like the combination of curcumin, resveratrol and flavonoids from green tea in Curacel. In a November 10, 2009, report in *Toxicology*, researchers from the Heart Foundation Research Centre, Faculty of Health, Griffith University, Australia, note that these molecules “afford protection against various stress-induced toxicities.” They have been shown to “inhibit inflammatory molecule synthesis, the formation of free radicals, nuclear damage and induce antioxidant enzyme expression. These responses have the potential to increase life expectancy.”

There are so many great benefits that I cannot wait to discover the next healthy virtue to be found in curcumin. So do enjoy curries and other curcumin-rich foods, but by all means take your curcumin supplement. It will do you a world of good! ■



## Resources

BCM-95® curcumin products from EuroPharma are available at health food stores and natural pharmacies nationwide. For more information, visit: [www.EuroPharmaUSA.com](http://www.EuroPharmaUSA.com), or call 866-598-5487.

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Dr. Coles is a visiting scholar at UCLA and is the world’s leading researcher into supercentenarians (the longest-lived people on earth).