



THE HEALTH FILE

(Specially compiled for National Curry Week from published medical and health research data up to October 2012)

Health Benefits of Curry:

Dishes that you will find on your curry house menu will usually list the ingredients and if they don't they should. If you want to watch your health whilst enjoying your food these are the herbs and spices you should watch out for :

Turmeric, curry's main ingredient is recognized by its yellow colour. A member of the ginger family, turmeric has long been associated with its healing properties. Used as a common antiseptic in India (chefs even rub it on cuts in the kitchen as an emergency measure), turmeric is used regularly to treat damaged skin such as cuts or burns.

It can help reduce inflammation of the joints (good for tennis elbow); this due to the presence of curcumin which is a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. It may also help deactivate genes that can trigger the onset and spread of breast cancer. Other studies suggest that curcumin may also be effective in slowing the progression of prostate and colorectal cancers, have some positive effect in stabilizing pancreatic cancer, help fight skin cancer and make melanoma skin cancer cells more likely to self-destruct.

Curry powder may help prevent Alzheimers; this is again due to the presence of curcumin that act to clear the brain of protein deposit that is thought to cause Alzheimer's and help improve memory. A study conducted on older men who ate more dishes containing turmeric performed better in memory tests.

Curcumin is effective in the treatment of several sexually transmitted diseases, including gonorrhoea and Chlamydia and a new study discovered that curcumin may play a vital role in liver health. Researchers at Saint Louis University in the US observed that curcumin seems to help fight and prevent a common yet very serious kind of fatty liver disease called non-alcoholic steatohepatitis. The disease can be a result of obesity and weight gain and affects 3 to 4 percent of US adults

Relieves carpal tunnel syndrome, arthritis, and joint inflammation. The anti-inflammatory compounds in turmeric appear to ease inflammation. This makes it potentially useful for relieving the inflammation in wrist and hand joints associated with carpal tunnel syndrome, for example.

German health authorities have declared turmeric tea a valuable remedy for stomach upset. Laboratory findings back this up: The curcumin in turmeric fights bacteria commonly responsible for infectious diarrhoea.

Cinnamon - Cinnamon is a natural antioxidant. The leaves are good for the relief of colic and diarrhoea. Cinnamon greatly enhances the ability of insulin to metabolise glucose and help control blood sugar levels.

Cinnamon has been found to reduce triglycerides, bad cholesterol, and sugar in the blood, thus helping those with high cholesterol, diabetes, and heart disease. Just half a teaspoon of cinnamon a day could help in controlling Type 2 diabetes, according to recent US research. In the study a one-gram capsule of cinnamon triggered a 20 per cent drop in blood sugar levels, cholesterol and triglycerides. The active ingredient in cinnamon is believed to be MHCP, a compound that seems to mimic the effects of insulin. It is hoped that this finding will lead to the development of a new treatment. Recent studies have shown that insulin resistance may also be involved in neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's, according to Graves. A study testing the effects of the "insulin-like" component of cinnamon on protein reactions associated with Alzheimer's disease is planned at UCSB's Neuroscience Research Institute (NRI).

In tests at Weber University, Cinnamon oil has proven more effective than Ampicillin in inhibiting the growth of Staphylococcal infections and unlike conventional antibiotic drugs, essential oils tend to leave beneficial bacteria intact while killing disease producing bacteria (pathogens). Additionally, bacteria do not acquire resistance to the oils as they do with antibiotics. Today when so many illnesses and bacteria are becoming resistant to antibiotics, the therapeutic effects of essential oils and their immune-boosting abilities may be just what we need

Black Pepper - Black pepper has a very long history of medical benefits : it alleviates hemorrhoids, alleviates gas, helps constipation, improves digestion, improves appetite loss, promotes sweating (cardio workout), promotes urination, anti-bacterial effects, natural anti-oxidant, and even helps in breaking down fat cells. Said to be good for fever, colic and indigestion as well as rheumatism. Also used for throat infections. Research, published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, found that piperine in black pepper blocks the formation of new fat cells..

Using laboratory studies and computer models, the researchers found piperine interferes with the activity of genes that control the generation of fat cells.

In their latest paper, researchers Soo-Jong Um and Ji-Cheon Jeong also point towards former studies that have indicated the health benefits of piperine, including its role in reducing fat levels in the bloodstream..

Black pepper and the black pepper plant, the paper's authors underline, have been used for centuries in traditional Eastern medicine to treat gastrointestinal distress, pain, inflammation and other disorders.

Anise - Anise leaves in curry are used to treat digestive problems, toothaches and the oil extract can be used to treat lice and scabies. Anise contains anethole and is good for relief of menstrual cramps.

Asafoetida - the main medical usage for Asafoetida is for the aid of digestive system, in mild cases of asthma, bronchitis and is traditionally used in the aid of children's cold. A digestive, disinfectant, antispasmodic, mildly diuretic and strengthens nerves.

Cardamom - Cardamom is used traditionally in Chinese medicine to treat stomach-aches, constipation, dysentery, and other digestion problems. For stomach disorders, a heart stimulant and even an aphrodisiac

Chili Pepper - Red chili peppers are very rich in vitamin C and pro-vitamin A. Additionally, peppers are a good source of most vitamins B, especially B6. Potassium in chili that are high in magnesium and iron and contains the magic ingredient capsiacin and capsidicin, a natural antibiotic. It is a powerful antioxidant helping to relieve cancer and cardiovascular problems. Combats heart attack and stroke and prevents blood clots and decreases cholesterol levels.

Chile peppers add a much-appreciated heat to chilly-weather dishes, and they can also give a boost to your metabolism. Capsaicin is the compound that gives fresh chillies, and spices including cayenne and chipotle, their kick. Studies show that capsaicin can increase the body's metabolic rate (causing one to burn more calories) and may stimulate brain chemicals that help us feel less hungry. In fact, one study found that people ate 16 percent fewer calories at a meal if they'd sipped a hot-pepper-spiked tomato juice (vs. plain tomato juice) half an hour earlier. Recent research found that capsinoids, similar but gentler chemicals found in milder chile hybrids, have the same effects-so even tamer sweet paprika packs a healthy punch. Capsaicin may also lower risk of ulcers by boosting the ability of stomach cells to resist infection by ulcer-causing bacteria and help the heart by keeping "bad" LDL cholesterol from turning into a more lethal, artery-clogging form.

Cloves - Cloves are reported by many people to be extremely effective in their struggle with nicotine cravings. Antiseptic and a stimulant. Painkiller for toothache.

Coriander - Coriander leaves have been used as a folk medicine for the relief of anxiety and insomnia in Iranian folk medicine. Aids digestion, relieves flatulence and helps urinary tract infections. Tradition treatment for type 2 Diabetes. The seeds as a poultice help relieve rheumatism and painful joints.

Cumin - Cumin can be really helpful in asthma, and a booster in immune system during cold and flu season. Capsulated Cumin can be beneficial to hair and nails, and if mixed with moisturized cream you can reap the benefits of a healthier skin. Helps to combat stroke, high blood pressure and cancer. Helps regulate heart rhythm and normal blood pressure.

Fenugreek – Good for skin problems, bronchitis and chest complaints. Also contains diosgenin which acts in a similar way to the body's own sex hormones! Antiviral properties stave off sniffles and sore throats and help milk production in pregnant women.

Garlic – good for heart function and blood circulation and helps deactivate carcinogens suppressing growth of tumours and lowers cholesterol levels and helps prevent strokes and blood clots.

Ginger – Aids digestion and is used as a decongestant and anti-inflammatory. Treats cold, chills and rheumatism. Also helps eliminate toxins from the body and promotes sweating and stimulates the circulation. Used to help morning sickness in pregnancy. Ginger has a well-deserved reputation for relieving an unsettled stomach. Studies show ginger extracts can help reduce nausea caused by morning sickness or following surgery or chemotherapy, though it's less effective for motion sickness. But ginger is also packed with inflammation-fighting compounds, such as gingerols, which some experts believe may hold promise in fighting some cancers and may reduce the aches of osteoarthritis and soothe sore muscles. In a recent study, people who took ginger capsules daily for 11 days reported 25 percent less muscle pain when they performed exercises designed to strain their muscles (compared with a similar group taking placebo capsules). Another study found that ginger-extract injections helped relieve osteoarthritis pain of the knee.

Saffron

Saffron has long been used in traditional Persian medicine as a mood lifter, usually steeped into a medicinal tea or used to prepare rice. Research from Iran's Roozbeh Psychiatric Hospital at Tehran University of Medical Sciences has found that saffron may help to relieve symptoms of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and depression. In one study, 75% of women with PMS who were given saffron capsules daily reported that their PMS symptoms (such as mood swings and depression) declined by at least half, compared with only 8 percent of women who didn't take saffron.

Some suggested 'healthy' dishes :

Chicken Tikka – cumin, coriander, yoghurt, cloves, ginger, turmeric, black pepper, cayenne

Coriander Garlic Chicken – turmeric, coriander, cumin, garlic, chillies, yoghurt

Roast Sardines – chillies, fennel, black pepper, turmeric, garlic, coriander

BBQ lamb chops – cumin, turmeric, coriander, red chilli, black pepper, garlic

Lamb Curry – coriander, chilli, ginger, garlic, cumin, cinnamon, fenugreek, turmeric

Dhansak – Tur, Masoor, Moong dal(lentils), garlic, ginger, chillies, cumin, cinnamon, coriander, cardamom, peppercorns

Biryani – garlic, ginger, chilli, black pepper, turmeric, cumin, cardamom, cinnamon

Lal Maans – red chillies, turmeric, cumin, yoghurt, garlic, cardamom, coriander.

Tomatoes

Researchers found that tomatoes are the biggest source of dietary lycopene; a powerful antioxidant that, unlike nutrients in most fresh fruits and vegetables, has

even greater bioavailability after cooking and processing. Tomatoes also contain other protective mechanisms, such as antithrombotic and anti-inflammatory functions.

Research has additionally found a relationship between eating tomatoes and a lower risk of certain cancers as well as other conditions, including cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, ultraviolet light-induced skin damage, and cognitive dysfunction.

Tomatoes make your skin look great. Beta-carotene, also found in carrots and sweet potatoes, helps protect skin against sun damage. Tomatoes' lycopene also makes skin less sensitive to UV light damage, a leading cause of fine lines and wrinkles. The vitamin K and calcium in tomatoes are both very good for strengthening and repairing bones. Lycopene also has been shown to improve bone mass, which is a great way to fight osteoporosis.

Tomatoes can reduce chronic pain. If you are one of the millions of people who deal with mild to moderate chronic pain (such as from arthritis or back pain), tomatoes may be a pain-buster. Tomatoes are high in bioflavonoids and carotenoids, which are known anti-inflammatory agents.

Chronic pain often involves chronic inflammation, so attacking the inflammation is a good way to fight the chronic pain.

Mushrooms

A study done on mice and published by the American Society for Nutrition found that white button mushrooms may promote immune function by increasing the production of antiviral and other proteins that are released by cells while they are trying to protect and repair the body's tissues. A later study showed that these mushrooms promoted the maturation of immune system cells—called dendritic cells—from bone marrow.

According to the researchers, this may help enhance the body's immunity leading to better defence systems against invading microbes.

B vitamins are vital for turning food (carbohydrates) into fuel (glucose), which the body burns to produce energy. They also help the body metabolize fats and protein. Mushrooms contain loads of vitamin B2 (riboflavin) and vitamin B3 (niacin):

Onions

The onion is the richest dietary source of quercetin, a potent antioxidant flavonoid (also in shallots, yellow and red onions only but not in white onions), which is found on and near the skin and is particularly linked to the health benefits of onions.

Quercetin has been shown to thin the blood, lower cholesterol, raise good-type HDL cholesterol, ward off blood clots, fight asthma, chronic bronchitis, hay fever, diabetes, atherosclerosis and infections and is specifically linked to inhibiting human stomach cancer. It's also an anti-inflammatory, antibiotic, antiviral, thought to have diverse anti-cancer powers. Quercetin is also a sedative. So far, there is no better food source of quercetin than onion skins.

Onions have chromium. This mineral improves the cell's ability to respond to insulin. For a clogged nose and sinusitis problems, onions can also help in loosening the mucous so that breathing would become easier.

Ingredients for health

Complaint	Herb, Spice or Veg
Bone strength	Tomatoes
Cuts	Turmeric
Inflammation of joints	Turmeric, Tomatoes, Onions
Cancer(breast, stomach, prostate)	Turmeric, Tomatoes, Cumin, Onions
Alzheimers	Turmeric, Cinnamon
Gonorrhea/Chlamydia	Turmeric
Steatohepatitis(liver disease)	Turmeric
Carpal tunnel syndrome	Turmeric
Arthritis	Turmeric, Ginger, Onions
Colic/diarrhoea	Cinnamon
Lower cholesterol	Cinnamon, Chilli, Garlic, Onions
Diabetes	Cinnamon, Coriander, Onions
Staphylococcal infections	Cinnamon
Hemorrhoids	Black Pepper
Digestion	Ginger, Coriander, Asafoetida, Cardamom, Black Pepper, Allspice, Anise
Rheumatism	Black Pepper, Ginger, Coriander
Asthma/bronchitis	Asafoetida, Cumin, Fenugreek, Onions
Stomach disorders	Cardamom, Ginger
Blood pressure/strokes/heart	Chilli, Cumin, Garlic
Nicotine craving	Cloves
Anxiety/Insomnia	Coriander
Urinary tract infection	Coriander
Morning sickness	Ginger
PMS/depression	Saffron
Fat reduction	Black Pepper, Mushrooms
Menstrual cramps	Anise
Colds	Fenugreek
Blood clots	Garlic, Tomatoes, Onions, Chilli
Healthy skin	Fenugreek, Cumin, Tomatoes