Herb Of The Month

October 1, 2000 By Michael Onstott

Turmeric

Part: Root
Forms: Whole, cut, or powdered root; capsules; tablets; liquid extract
Uses: (Internal) stomach, diarrhea, appetite loss, gallstones, menstrual irregularities, liver disorders and as a anti-inflammatory and anti-tumor
(External) bruises, infected wounds, sore eyes, inflammatory skin conditions, leech bites
Dose: 2 to 3 grams powder or 1teaspoon (prepared as tea or with food), 1 to 2 capsules/tablets (standardized to 400 to 500 mg), or 15 drops liquid extract—twice or three times daily
Monthly Cost: $1-$3 (powder); $8-$30 (capsules); $7-12 (liquid extract)
Caution: Should not be used in pregnant women or people with bleeding disorders, colitis, stomach ulcers, or obstructed bile ducts. Those who have gallstones or serous illness should be supervised by a physician.

Curry with your cancer therapy? Could be, say researchers. Turmeric, the East Indian spice used to dye clothing and give curry its characteristic golden color, contains a powerful antioxidant called curcumin—compound scientist say scavenges cancer-causing chemicals and prevents them from binding to healthy cells. Recent studies confirm that curcumin can shrink tumors; inhibit skin, mouth, and breast cancers; kill parasites, bacteria, and fungus; protect liver cells and the stomach lining; and reduce inflammation and pain of rheumatoid arthritis, bruises, wounds, and insect bites. In India, turmeric has traditionally been used not only as an aromatic agent to improve digestion and appetite, but also as an all around “cleanser” and antibiotic for brushing teeth, clearing nasal passages, ears, eyes, and purifying the blood. He herb can also help regulate menstrual flow and prevent PMS, activate liver function, reduce blood sugar in diabetics, prevent and dissolve gallstones (see Caution) and lower elevated cholesterol. Indian herbalists’ advice: “Let your spice rack be your medicine chest.” Take two with vindaloo.

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