



Capsicum

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Capsicum is the name of a group of annual plants in the nightshade (Solanaceae) family. They are native to Mexico and Central America but are cultivated for food in many warmer regions of the world. Capsicum varieties include the cayenne pepper, jalapeño pepper, other hot peppers, and paprika. Capsaicin an extract from cayenne and other peppers is the most-studied active ingredient in the plant and has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use on the skin. Scientific/medical name(s): Capsicum annum, Capsicum frutescens.



As far back as 5000 BC, Indians in South America ate meals prepared with hot peppers. Native Mexican Indians and some Chinese (Hunan and Szechuan) are also known to have used hot peppers in many dishes and continue to do so. These cultures have also used hot peppers in herbal medicine to treat numerous conditions over the years.

While foods made with different kinds of peppers are popular in a variety of ethnic cuisines, it is only in recent years that interest in using capsaicin from hot peppers to manage pain and other symptoms or illnesses has grown. Medical researchers are now looking at the use of capsaicin as a possible cancer treatment. Capsaicin has been shown to slow the growth of prostate cancer cells in laboratory studies and rodents. Researchers are looking into the use of capsaicin for prostate cancer in humans.

Capsicum herb has been used by alternative medicine practitioners as a remedy for a variety of conditions, such as upset stomach, menstrual cramps, headaches, shingles, diarrhea, loss of appetite, stomach ulcers, poor digestion, sore throat, itching, alcoholism, motion sickness, toothache, malaria, and yellow fever. Some practitioners also claim it can prevent colds, heart disease, and stroke; increase sexual potency; foster weight loss; and strengthen the heart.

The plant grows in warm climates and is added to many herbal formulas as a catalyst for the other herbs. Its red color is partly due to its high vitamin A content. Capsicum has been used for decades as a catalyst for other herbs. Because capsicum stimulates circulation and enhances blood flow, it is considered food for the circulatory system, a common condiment to the diet.

As a cardiovascular stimulant, Capsicum assists in lowering blood pressure and breaking down cholesterol buildup. The warming properties of Capsicum are useful for people suffering from poor circulation to the hands and feet and other related conditions. Capsicum has been used as a digestive aid to ease intestinal

inflammation, stimulate protective mucus membranes of the stomach, and also relieve pain caused by ulcers.

Capsicum is commonly used to buffer pain from other ailments, including arthritis, varicose veins, headaches, menstrual cramps and respiratory conditions such as asthma.



In herbal treatment today, capsaicin is used for rheumatism, arthritis, and as an internal disinfectant and a heart stimulant. Capsaicin can dramatically reduce chronic nerve pain. Studies have proven its usefulness for arthritis, shingles, trigeminal neuralgia, and diabetic neuropathy. Cayenne is also rich in salicylates, natural aspirin like compounds. Cayenne pepper warms the body by quickly dilating small capillaries and increasing circulation to the skin. The herb's most prominent attribute is to increase circulation, and is often added to activate and complement other herbs.

The virus that causes chickenpox, the Varicella zoster virus (VSV), can become dormant in nerve cells after an episode of chickenpox and later re-emerge as shingles (herpes zoster). Initially, red patches of rash develop into blisters. Because the virus travels along the nerve to the skin, it can damage the nerve and cause it to become inflamed. This condition can be very painful. If the pain persists long after the rash disappears, it is known as post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN). Capsicum releases endorphins (nature's natural painkiller) into the body reducing or eliminating the pain of shingles.

Any individual who has had chickenpox can develop shingles. Approximately 300,000 cases of shingles occur every year in the United States. Overall, approximately 20% of those who have had chickenpox as children develop shingles at some time in their lives. People of all ages--even children--can be affected, but the incidence increases with age.

Clinical studies have demonstrated its value in alleviating pain and discomfort from rheumatoid arthritis. Cayenne fights internal bacteria, relieves gas, and accentuates the action of digestive enzymes. Applied topically, it works partly as a counter irritant, but it also blocks a body chemical integral to the transmission of pain impulses.

Overweight. A clinical study conducted by scientists at Laval University in Quebec found that eating cayenne at breakfast decreased appetite and led to lower fat and calorie intake throughout the day. Cayenne helps boost your metabolism and induces the body to burn off more fat instead of storing it in the body.

Capsaicin in topical form is promoted mainly for pain caused by conditions such as arthritis and general muscle soreness. The FDA approved a topical form of capsaicin for treating pain more than twenty years ago that is still sold without a prescription. There is some evidence that capsaicin may be useful in managing post-surgical pain from mastectomy, thoracotomy (chest surgery), amputation, and other surgery related to mainstream cancer treatment. Researchers have found that capsaicin may provide temporary relief for pain from mouth sores caused by chemotherapy and radiation therapy.

Capsicum can help relieve the pain of arthritis, shingles, and nerve pain in people with diabetes when used as a lotion or cream and applied to the skin. There is some scientific evidence that capsicum might also help reduce painful tender points in people with

fibromyalgia when used as a lotion or cream and applied to the skin. Cayenne and other peppers are considered safe to eat in moderate amounts for those who are not allergic to peppers. The FDA includes peppers on their "generally recognized as safe" list of food ingredients.

Although natural remedies are promoted for shingles, it is important that you consult a doctor as soon as possible if you think you have shingles, in order to shorten the infection and reduce the risk of complications. This is especially important if the rash appears near the eye area, which can cause temporary or permanent loss of vision.

African Bird Pepper, African Chillies, African Pepper, Aji, Bird Pepper, Capsaicin, Capsicum annuum, Capsicum baccatum, Capsicum chinense, Capsicum frutescens, Capsicum minimum, Capsicum pubscens,

Cayenne, Cayenne Pepper, Chili, Chili Pepper, Chilli, Chillies, Cis-capsaicin, Civamide, Garden Pepper, Goat's Pod, Grains of Paradise, Green Chili Pepper, Green Pepper, Hot Pepper, Hungarian Pepper, Ici Fructus, Katuvira, Lal Mirchi, Louisiana Long Pepper, Louisiana Sport Pepper, Mexican Chillies, Mirchi, Oleoresin capsicum, Paprika, Piment de Cayenne, Piment Fort, Pimento, Poivre de Cayenne, Red Pepper, Sweet Pepper, Tabasco Pepper, Trans-capsaicin, Zanzibar Pepper, Zucapsaicin.



Be sure to try NSP's Capsicum (100 caps), Capsicum Extract (2 fl. oz.), or Capsicum (Two-3 oz. Shakers).

References

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Yours in Good Health!

Sincerely,

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