



## Garlic

Garlic is one of the most valuable and versatile foods on the planet. Garlic belongs to the allium family of vegetables, which also includes onions, chives, shallots and leeks.

Today garlic is a widely recognized health-enhancing supplement. Garlic promotes the well being of the heart and immune systems with antioxidant properties and helps maintain healthy blood circulation. One of garlic's most potent health benefits includes the ability to enhance the body's immune cell activity. Also, good for the heart and circulatory system, garlic has been shown to improve digestion. It is considered a tonic in traditional Chinese and Ayurvedic medicines making garlic one of the most important medicinal herbs we have.



### **What are the Benefits of Garlic?**

Garlic can be used to treat high cholesterol, parasites, respiratory problems, poor digestion, and low energy. Studies suggest that regularly eating garlic helps lower blood pressure, controls blood sugar and blood cholesterol, and boosts the immune system. It has also been found to reduce the risk of esophageal, stomach, and colon cancer.

### **Preventing heart disease**

Garlic and garlic-derived supplements can help reduce the risk of heart disease in several important ways. Garlic lowers blood pressure and cholesterol, lessens destructive oxidation and decreases the formation of blood clots. It also slows hardening of arteries (atherosclerosis) and helps maintain their elasticity. At the same time, garlic decreases troublesome symptoms of atherosclerosis, such as poor circulation, fatigue and headaches.

The positive effect of garlic on the circulatory system is well documented and it has been proven to: lower blood pressure, decrease platelet aggregation, lower serum triglycerides and LDL-cholesterol (the bad type) levels, increase serum HDL-cholesterol (the good type) and fibrinolysis (the process through which the body breaks up blood clots).

Plus it stimulates the production of nitric oxide in the lining of blood vessel walls, a substance that helps them to relax. As a result of these beneficial actions garlic helps to prevent arteriosclerosis and thereby reduces the risk of heart attack or stroke.

### **Circulatory Effects**

More than 250 publications have shown that garlic supports the cardiovascular system. It may lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels in the blood, inhibit platelet stickiness (aggregation), and increase fibrinolysis-which results in a slowing of blood coagulation. It is mildly antihypertensive and has antioxidant activity.

### **High Blood Pressure**

Garlic is regarded as one of the most effective remedies to lower blood pressure. The pressure and tension are reduced because it has the power to ease the spasm of the small arteries. It also slows the pulse and modifies the heart rhythm, besides relieving the symptoms of dizziness, shortness of breath and the formation of gas within the digestive track

### **Digestive System Disorders:**

Garlic is one of the most beneficial foods for the digestive system. It exercises a beneficial effect on the lymph, aids in elimination of noxious waste matter in the body. It stimulates peristaltic action and the secretion of the digestive juices. Garlic produces a very marked effect on the intestine. It is effective to cleanse parasites. It has also a soothing effect on the various forms of diarrhea. Problems such as colitis, dysentery and many other intestinal upsets can be successfully treated with fresh garlic or garlic capsules.

### **Skin Disorders**

Garlic has also been used successfully for a variety of skin disorders Pimples disappear without scar when rubbed with raw garlic several times a day. Even very persistent form of acne, suffered by some adults, has also been healed with garlic. The external use of garlic helps to clear the skin of spots, pimples, boils, and warts. The process is further helped by taking the garlic orally also, to purify the blood-steam so as to secure a long-term clearance of the skin. A regular course of three garlic capsules per day should help to clear minor skin infections quickly.

### **Antimicrobial Actions**

Garlic has antibacterial, antiviral, and anti-fungal activity. Garlic appears to have roughly 1 % the strength of penicillin against certain types of bacteria. This means it is not a substitute for antibiotics, but it can be considered as a support against some bacterial infections. Candida albicans growth is inhibited by garlic, and garlic has shown long-term benefit for recurrent yeast infections.

### **Antibiotic action**

Garlic's compounds also have antibacterial and anti-fungal properties. Garlic fights off all sorts of infections, including those of the lung, sinus, bladder, and vagina, as well as colds and flu. Garlic is a practical remedy used both internally and externally to treat fungal and bacterial skin infection.

### **Improving immune function**

Garlic also stimulates the immune system by increasing activity of several types of immune cells: macrophages, helper T-cells, killer T-cells and interleukin. It even protects against genetic changes in DNA.

### **Cancer preventative**



Several compounds are involved in garlic's possible anticancer effects. Garlic contains allyl sulfur and other compounds that slow or prevent the growth of tumor cells. Allyl sulfur compounds, which occur naturally in garlic and onions, make cells vulnerable to the stress created by products of cell division. Because cancer cells divide very quickly, they generate more stressors than most normal cells. Thus, cancer cells are damaged by the presence of allyl sulfur compounds to a much greater extent than normal cells. A survey of 41,000 participants over age 55 by the Iowa Woman's Health Study determined that garlic reduces the risk of colon cancer, as well. Research at Memorial Sloan-Kettering

Cancer Center in New York found that garlic's sulfur compounds probably slow prostate cancer by breaking down excess testosterone.

Researchers widely believe that the organic compound, allicin - which gives garlic its aroma and flavour - acts as a most powerful antioxidant. Dried or powdered garlic tablets are suitable to take advantage of garlic's immune-boosting qualities.

Garlic is a great natural source of Germanium. Although not officially classed as a "trace mineral", Germanium is one of the most important reasons why natural foods, such as garlic are recommended by nutritional practitioners. Many disease states, such as osteoporosis, heart disease, immune system dysfunction and cancer have been shown to

respond to germanium therapy. It would appear that the reason for germanium's effectiveness is its ability to regulate the uptake of oxygen in the cells.

Garlic is also rich in selenium, and in another trace mineral, manganese, which also functions as a cofactor in a number of other important antioxidant defense enzymes. Studies have found that in adults deficient in manganese, the level of HDL (the "good form" of cholesterol) is decreased.

Garlic appears to be safe during pregnancy and breast-feeding. In fact, two studies have shown that babies prefer breast milk better from mothers who regularly eat garlic.

Note that due to garlic's anti-clotting and blood thinning properties, people taking anti-coagulant drugs or who are scheduled for surgery should check with their doctor before taking garlic supplements.

**Yours in Good Health!**

Sincerely,

Chris Ritchason  
Dr. Jack & Verlyn Ritchason, Founders  
The Back to Herbs Team

#### **References**

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