



Capsicum

Warms and improves circulation to all parts of the body, easing the pain of arthritis, muscle spasms, stiff joints and cluster headaches, strong pain-relieving agent that alleviates the joint pain of arthritis, rheumatism, muscle spasms, cramps and bowel pain.

Information: Herbs/Nutritionals/Medicinals can be very strong, consequently, if each one is not tailored to your specific needs, then you can risk more harm than good. This information is meant to be used by your VHC Medical Team and personal Physician as they build your Total Health Plan. Never attempt to adjust your prescribed medications and/or Natural Treatments without your physician's and Medical Team's knowledge and guidance. Since herbals/nutritionals and medications can interact with each other, it is always advisable to consult with your health care provider and The Vibrant Health Community at www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com (or call 1-866-378-8253) before starting or changing your program.

Botanical: *Capsicum annuum*

Family: *Solanaceae* (nightshade)

Other common names: Cayenne, Red Pepper, Bell Pepper, Bird Pepper, African Bird Pepper, Chili Pepper

Capsicum is a pepper that *warms and improves circulation* to all parts of the body, *easing the pain of arthritis, muscle spasms, stiff joints and cluster headaches*. Included in many cuisines, it is a *great aid for digestion* and is believed to *regulate heart and blood pressure* and even improve athletic performance! Recent studies promise interesting developments in the area of cancer research, particularly for prostate cancer; hopefully, clinical trials will prove effective.

It is rich in nutrients, a range of carotenes (especially beta-carotene), compounds as lutein, zeaxanthin, an alkaloid bitter, essential fatty acids, amino acids, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, B-vitamins and the antioxidant vitamins A, C and E. There is also

an ingredient, the very potent capsaicin, a pungent phenolic compound that is structurally similar to eugenol, the pain-relieving compound found in cloves and some other spices, and also the center of a great deal of new research in the area of prostate cancer (read below).

Beneficial Uses: Capsicum is an overall digestive aid that stimulates the production of gastric juices, clears excess mucus from the stomach, helps to alleviate stomach ulcers from within, improves the appetite and relieves nausea from seasickness. It is also considered a carminative that helps to relieve gas. Capsicum relieves pain (taken both internally and applied topically). It provides natural heat, and its ingredient, capsaicin, is a strong pain-relieving agent that alleviates the joint pain of arthritis, rheumatism, muscle spasms, cramps and bowel pain. In addition, Capsicum triggers the release of endorphins by the brain, chemicals that relieve pain that may be helpful in treating cluster headaches.

There are interesting developments on the horizon regarding the use of the capsaicin in Capsicum in the area of cancer treatments. In the March, 2006, issue of *Cancer Research*, Dr. Phillip Koeffler, director of hematology and oncology at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and a professor of medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles, reported that capsaicin caused almost eighty percent of prostate cancer cells in mice to die. Furthermore, prostate cancer tumors treated with capsaicin were about one-fifth the size of tumors in untreated mice. "Capsaicin inhibits the growth of human prostate cancer cell in Petri dishes and mice," said Dr. Koeffler, and based on the findings, Koeffler believe the next step is a trial to see if it works in patients with prostate cancer. "Capsaicin probably has several effects," Koeffler said. Most noticeable is its effect in blocking NF-kappa Beta, a molecular mechanism that promotes cancer cell growth," he noted. "In addition, capsaicin also was effective against leukemia, and might be effective in slowing or preventing the growth of other cancers as well," he added. "This study does not prove that capsaicin will prove effective in the treatment of prostate cancer in humans," said Dr. David L. Katz, an associate professor of public health and director of the Prevention Research Center at Yale University School of Medicine. "Nor does it tell us that eating peppers rich in the substance will help prevent such cancer, or forestall its growth. But it provides a compelling argument for clinical study of capsaicin in human prostate cancer to put these questions to the test."

Capsicum is a powerful stimulant that boosts metabolism, helps to enhance athletic performance and is valuable in treating prostration. As a cardiovascular stimulant, Capsicum helps to regulate the heart and blood pressure. It improves blood circulation and is thought to normalize both high and low blood pressure. It apparently increases heart action without increasing blood pressure, and Capsicum

reportedly significantly lowers serum cholesterol and triglycerides.

Capsicum speeds up the metabolism of fat and may reduce weight gain due to a high fat diet by increasing the liver enzymes accountable for fat metabolism and decreases fat deposits in the liver caused by high fat diet.

Capsicum is an anti-inflammatory and may ease aspirin-induced upset stomach and damage due to alcohol. As an astringent, Capsicum is useful in the treatment of diarrhea and may arrest bleeding from ulcers. Capsicum is an overall tonic that is said to strengthen the immune system and believed to build up resistance to illness, sore throats, sinus infections and colds. As a vermifuge, Capsicum is said to be effective in destroying and expelling many types of worms. Capsicum is called a carrier or catalyst herb that increases the efficacy of almost every other herb or herbal combination.

Capsicum is believed to counter shock, and when the powder or extract is placed on or under the tongue, it has been said to help alleviate crisis situations such as shock, hemorrhage and heart attack.

Contraindications:

Avoid large doses of Capsicum (many times the recommended dosage) when pregnant and nursing, and large doses may cause stomach pain, kidney or liver problems. In its bulk form, be sure to keep away from eyes and mucous membranes, and wash hands thoroughly after contact with any loose form of Capsicum. Do not apply Capsicum cream to injured skin or open wounds, and if you ingest Capsicum, and it is scorching your mouth, drink milk to neutralize the heat. Do not take Capsicum without talking to your doctor first if you are taking high blood pressure medicine; blood thinning medicines; medicine for seizures, migraine headache, sedation or muscle relaxants (it may increase absorption). Avoid prolonged use if you have

hypertension or peptic ulcers. Asthmatics should not inhale Capsicum fumes, which can be irritating to lungs, and Capsicum may not be

appropriate for people with irritable bowel syndrome or bowel inflammation.

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