



Capsicum

Stock #160-5 (100 capsules)

Capsicum has long been used as a stimulant to increase circulation and cardiovascular activity, while at the same time lowering blood pressure and aiding in the prevention of heart attack and stroke. Capsaicin, a bitter alkaloid, is the active constituent responsible for capsicum's ability to stimulate circulation and alter the body's regulation of temperature, thus increasing perspiration. Capsicum's warming properties are useful for poor circulation and related conditions, including cold hands and feet, cold stages of fevers and varicose veins.

Capsicum has been found to effectively stimulate production of digestive and mucosal fluids which helps improve digestion, soothes inflammation, enhances the removal of toxins from the body, and relieves gastrointestinal problems, including bleeding ulcers, colic, dyspepsia, flatulence and even diarrhea. Capsicum's antiseptic properties have been proven active against various gastrointestinal pathogens (disease-causing agents).

Recent studies have found capsicum protects lung tissues from free radical damage by increasing the production of antioxidant enzymes such as SOD (superoxide dismutase).

Capsicum's most common use is as a catalyst in herbal combinations, promoting the absorption of other nutrients. In fact, capsicum is commonly added to most any herbal formula, with the exception of some nervine or relaxing formulas. Capsicum has been proven beneficial for numerous ailments, including arthritis, cardiovascular disease, gastric ulcers, vascular headaches, impotence (resulting from venous insufficiency), infections, kidney problems, menstrual complaints, respiratory conditions such as asthma and pleurisy and thyroid dysfunction.

Capsicum is believed to help cardiovascular disease because of its stimulating action and ability to breakdown cholesterol buildup. Capsaicin, the active constituent which makes capsicum hot, promotes the conversion of cholesterol into bile acids which can then be excreted by the body—an action which may help prevent atherosclerosis.

Capsicum contains a rich supply of vitamin C and alpha-tocopherol (vitamin E), the most potent form of vitamin E with the highest nutritional and biological value. Capsicum also contains carotenes—antioxidants known for their effect in helping to prevent cancer and cardiovascular disorders and for helping to protect the body from carcinogenic and toxic chemicals. The high amount of beta-carotene in capsicum, which gives the herb its color, has also been shown to provide a healing effect on ulcers.

A French study found capsicum beneficial for chronic fatigue. Other studies indicate capsicum may be useful for mild depression and for improving athletic performance.

A small pinch of capsicum added to warm water makes an excellent gargle for hoarseness and sore throats.

Topically, capsicum was used in poultices as an antibacterial agent and as a local analgesic (pain-reliever). When capsicum is first applied it can cause a burning sensation and a degree of discomfort; however, continued exposure actually desensitizes nerve endings to pain. The alkaloid capsaicin, is responsible for this “numbing” action. Capsaicin actually blocks the neuropeptide known as Substance P, from carrying pain signals to the brain. Recent studies have shown remarkable results in the treatment of diabetic neuropathy.

Capsicum is a rich source of beta-carotene and vitamin C, as well as vitamins B1, B2, B3 (niacin), B5 (pantothenic acid), B6 and B9 (folic acid). Capsicum also contains high amounts of cobalt and zinc.

Although large quantities of hot peppers or high doses of capsicum powder can severely irritate the esophagus, stomach, and possibly the kidneys, reports a few years ago implicating capsicum in stomach cancer or stomach ulcers have since been discounted. As a measure of safety, however, those with gastrointestinal or kidney disorders should avoid *over-consumption* of peppers or capsicum supplements. Also, pregnant women should avoid powdered capsicum leaves and stems, as they have been known to promote uterine contractions.