



For Immediate Release

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Advice to Patients on the Difference Between Turmeric and Curcumin as Medical Treatments

Clinicians and researchers often use the names “turmeric” and “curcumin” interchangeably, causing confusion among patients

Washington, DC - The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) released the following information and advice for patients on the difference between turmeric and curcumin when they are used as medical treatments:

Turmeric is a plant that when harvested, cleaned, dried, and powdered becomes a gold-colored spice. Commonly used in Asian food, turmeric is the main spice in curry. Turmeric has been used for centuries to treat a wide variety of conditions, including those of the skin, pulmonary, and gastrointestinal systems, aches, pains, wounds, sprains, and liver disorders.

Curcumin is the main active ingredient in turmeric. First chemically characterized in 1910, today curcumin is used for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.¹

“While turmeric is the parent botanical that curcumin comes from, they are different chemical compounds,” said Dr. Paul Anderson, a naturopathic doctor, pharmacology and biochemistry professor, and leading authority in intravenous (IV) therapy formulation and infusion techniques, including IV administration of curcumin. “An unfortunate circumstance is that many people, including clinicians and researchers, use the terms ‘turmeric’ and ‘curcumin’ interchangeably. This can cause confusion among patients seeking information on the medical treatments available using them and is a disservice to those who might benefit from the therapeutic use of these compounds.”

According to [WebMD](#), turmeric and curcumin are typically administered either orally or applied to the skin and considered safe in the appropriate dosages. Curcumin can also be administered intravenously, which results in better and faster absorption. However, according to Dr. Anderson, patients considering IV administrations of curcumin should be aware that while turmeric and curcumin are related, they are not the same thing.

“For curcumin, there are FDA-registered compounding pharmacies manufacturing curcumin designed for IV administration as a compounded drug with FDA-approved products,” said Dr. Anderson. “There is also an intravenous curcumin medication currently in Phase II of the

¹ Menon VP, Sudheer AR. Antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties of curcumin. *Advanced Experimental Medical Biology* 2007;595:105-25.



FDA approval process and no adverse events have occurred. And there are numerous scientific trials using intravenous curcumin underway. For turmeric, there are no trials for intravenous use and, to the best of my knowledge, no turmeric is being manufactured for IV administration in the United States.”

Advice for patients on medical treatments using turmeric and curcumin

For the protection of patients, the AANP offers the following advice to anyone interested in turmeric or curcumin medical treatments:

- 1. Consult with a naturopathic (ND) or conventional doctor (MD) before being treated with turmeric or curcumin.** Make sure you know which drug is being recommended and talk to your physician about which one is right for you and how it should be administered in your situation.
- 2. Make sure your ND is licensed or certified.** Not all practitioners who call themselves naturopathic doctors are licensed or certified to practice naturopathic medicine. To be licensed or certified, a doctor must have completed a four-year program at a naturopathic medical school accredited by agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The AANP [maintains a list](#) of states and U.S. territories that license naturopathic physicians.
- 3. Provide your doctor with your complete medical history and that of family members, and inform him or her of any medications or supplements you might be taking.** Your health status is based on genetics, environment and lifestyle. Together, these factors provide essential clues to medical conditions you might be at risk for or that might run in your family. In addition, knowing what pharmaceuticals or supplements you are taking can help your doctor avoid known potential problems.
- 4. Ask questions and make sure you understand any treatment or medication that is being recommended.** Ensuring patient safety is the top priority and everyone involved in the health care system has a role to play, including you. As an active, involved and informed member of your own health care team, you can help make your health care experience safer.
- 5. Know that no medication or medical treatment is 100% safe, including some that are commonly used by many people every day.** For example, there over [1,000 FDA-approved drugs](#) that list the terms “fatal” and “anaphylaxis” (pertaining to Type 1 allergy) in their adverse event section. Even a commonly used medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) presents significant risks, with more than 56,000 emergency room visits, 2,600 hospitalizations, and an estimated 458 deaths due to acute liver failure from the use of acetaminophen.²

² Lee, WM. Acetaminophen and the U.S. acute liver failure study group: lowering the risks of hepatic failure. *Hepatology* July 2004;40(1):6-9.



According to the National Institutes of Health, [more than one third of American adults](#) use some form of complementary, alternative, or integrative treatment. The AANP estimates that 2 million patients benefit from naturopathic treatment, and many of these patients have not found relief for their health conditions through conventional care. While all consumers are advised to become informed about all aspects of their health care, they deserve access to therapies that have a long history of safe use.

About Dr. Paul Anderson

Dr. Paul Anderson is a naturopathic physician, researcher, and leading authority in intravenous (IV) therapy formulation and infusion techniques. He is CEO of the Anderson Medical Group in Seattle, which includes Advanced Medical Therapies, a state-of-the-art medical center providing fully compliant IV, hyperbaric, and mild hyperthermia therapies. Dr. Anderson is former Chief of IV Services for Bastyr Oncology Research Center and a past Professor at Bastyr University, where he continues to consult in research design and holds the rank of Full Professor. He is a graduate of the National University of Natural Medicine in Portland, Oregon and began instructing classes at naturopathic medical schools in the early 1990s. His monograph on the intravenous use of curcumin for cancer and chronically ill patients is available [here](#).

About the AANP

The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians is the professional association that represents licensed naturopathic physicians. The AANP strives to make naturopathic medicine available to every American, and to increase recognition of naturopathic physicians as the identified authorities on natural medicine. Learn more at www.naturopathic.org.

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