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**File: ■ Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)
■ Dentistry**

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RE: Turmeric Offers Relief from Dental Problems

Chaturvedi TP. Uses of turmeric in dentistry: an update. *Indian J Dent Res.* 2009;20(1):107-109.

Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*), indigenous to Southeast Asia, has long been used and cultivated throughout India. In both Ayurvedic and traditional Chinese medicine, turmeric is used to improve digestion and reduce gas and bloating. Its main active constituent, curcumin, has been found to exhibit a wide range of therapeutic actions. In this article, the author (a professor in the Faculty of Dental Sciences at Banaras Hindu University in India) summarizes the healing properties of turmeric and highlights its use in dentistry.

Turmeric has been shown to possess antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antiallergic, antimutagenic, antiseptic, and antibacterial properties. It can be used to protect the liver from toxic compounds; improve circulation and protect against atherosclerosis; increase the production of enzymes that digest fats and sugars and stop cholesterol from forming gallstones; treat chronic anterior uveitis, some urinary disorders, and some parasitic infections; and facilitate the process of scabbing when applied topically for smallpox and chicken pox.

This author suggests ways that turmeric can offer relief for dental problems:

- Rinse the mouth with turmeric water (boil 5 g of turmeric powder, two cloves, and two dried leaves of guava in 200 g water) for instant relief.
- Massage aching teeth with roasted ground turmeric to eliminate pain and swelling.
- Apply the powder of burnt turmeric pieces and bishop's weed seed on teeth to strengthen gums and teeth.
- Rub a paste (1 tsp of turmeric, ½ tsp of salt, and ½ tsp of mustard oil) on the teeth and gums twice daily to provide relief from gingivitis and periodontitis.

Turmeric can also be used as an ingredient in a composition applied as a tooth sealant to prevent or reduce caries. Because of its yellow pigment, it can be used as a dental-plaque staining agent to detect the presence of dental plaque.

The author concludes that the "use of plants and herbs for dental care is a very common indigenous system of medicine, and we must include it in our everyday life."

—*Shari Henson*

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