

One Spice Actually Kills Cancer Cells

Eat curry. It may well be the new wonder food. An extract that is found in the bright yellow curry spice turmeric actually kills cancer cells, The BBC News reports of a study from the Cork Cancer Research Centre in Ireland.

Scientists and all those famous "old wives" have long thought that the chemical, which is called **curcumin**, has healing powers for everything from arthritis to dementia. But now, there is actual proof that it deals a fatal blow to esophageal cancer cells--at least in the lab. Led by Dr. Sharon McKenna, **the team found that curcumin started to kill cancer cells within 24 hours**. It does this by triggering lethal cell death signals that when received by the cancer cells **cause those cells to digest themselves**.

"Scientists have known for a long time that natural compounds have the potential to treat faulty cells that have become cancerous and we suspected that curcumin might have therapeutic value," McKenna told the BBC.

The takeaway: This groundbreaking research opens the possibility of using the natural chemicals found in turmeric to develop new treatments for esophageal cancer. The study findings have been published in the British Journal of Cancer.