



Intravenous Curcumin in Cancer Care: Patient Resource

What is curcumin?

Curcumin is a compound found in the plant turmeric (*Curcuma longa*). Curcumin is available as a dietary supplement and has been used to treat various health conditions. Most commonly it is taken by mouth, but it can also be infused intravenously (IV) by a healthcare provider.

What is intravenous (IV) curcumin used for?

IV curcumin may be recommended by integrative cancer care providers with goals of:

- Enhancing the effect of cancer treatments
- Improving treatment outcomes or slowing cancer progression
- Supporting quality of life

However, these claims and uses in cancer care are not proven, and IV curcumin is not to be used as a cure for cancer. Curcumin should not be considered an alternative to chemotherapy or other standard cancer treatments.

Does IV curcumin work?

There is very little research on the use of IV curcumin. Only six small studies have been conducted, most of which looked at safety and dosing. Overall, there is not enough evidence to determine if IV curcumin is effective. More research is needed.

How does IV curcumin work?

There are several ways in which curcumin might work. Curcumin decreases inflammation, which is one of the most important effects of this herb. Other actions include targeting signaling pathways that may halt cancer growth, impacting the immune system, and preventing growth of new blood vessels in tumours. Curcumin also has some protective effects on normal cells.

Is IV curcumin safe?

Based on the limited data available, IV curcumin has been well tolerated. IV curcumin should be used with caution in patients with gallbladder disease and patients on anticoagulant and anti-platelet medications. Curcumin could interact with some medications and should be discussed with your healthcare provider.

Please contact your healthcare provider to discuss whether IV curcumin therapy may have a role in your care.

What are the side effects of IV curcumin?

Side effects with IV curcumin have generally been mild and transient (short-lived). Reported side effects include fever and chills, anemia, changes to red blood cells, dizziness/headache, common cold symptoms, changes in some lab tests, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, transient euphoric symptoms, itching hands and feet, infusion-reactions, and skin rash. Only three serious side effects have been reported in research studies: hemolysis (destruction of red blood



cells), low sodium (salt), and facial swelling. A few other rare side effects have been reported and can be discussed with your healthcare provider.

What is the recommended dose, frequency, and length of use of IV curcumin?

The dose of IV curcumin is often based on body weight. Doses of 170-510 mg for an average size adult have been administered weekly for 8-12 weeks in research studies. However, higher doses have been used in practice.

Where can I get more information?

For more detailed information including references you can read the companion healthcare professional version on the [CCNM research website](#). You can also consult with a healthcare provider such as a naturopathic doctor, medical doctor, or nurse practitioner who is experienced in the use of IV curcumin.

Disclaimer

This monograph provides a summary of available evidence and neither advocates for nor against the use of a particular therapy. Every effort is made to ensure the information included in this monograph is accurate at the time it is published. Prior to using a new therapy or product, always consult a licensed healthcare provider. The information in this monograph should not be interpreted as medical advice nor should it replace the advice of a qualified healthcare provider.