

Curry powder 'could make chemotherapy more effective'

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

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A common ingredient in curry could help target and destroy chemotherapy-resistant cancer cells, scientists said today.

This could improve the effectiveness of chemotherapy and also help prevent the disease from returning.

Researchers at the University of Leicester have been using curcumin - an extract of root turmeric, commonly used to spice up curries - to target chemo-resistant cells.



Currying favour: Curcumin, from turmeric, has been found to reduce the number of chemotherapy-resistant cells

The aim is to use the extract in colorectal tumour tissue. Colorectal cancer accounts for more than 600,000 deaths a year and is the third leading cause of cancer deaths in the western world.

Lead researcher Dr Karen Brown, said: 'Following treatment for cancer, small populations of cancer cells often remain which are responsible for disease returning.

'These cells appear to have different properties to the bulk of cells within a tumour, making them resistant to chemotherapy.

'Previous laboratory research has shown that curcumin, from turmeric, has not only improved the effectiveness of chemotherapy but has also reduced the number of chemo-resistant cells, which has implications in preventing the disease returning.

'We hope that our work will lead to a better understanding of the mechanisms through which curcumin targets resistant cells in tumours.

'It should also help us identify those patient populations who are most likely to benefit from curcumin treatment in the future.'

Turmeric, part of the ginger family, is best known as an orange/yellow powder used as a spice for curries, but has been used for medicinal purposes for centuries.

Its potential use in Alzheimer's, arthritis and other disorders is also being investigated around the world.

Fellow researcher Dr Lynne Howells said money from Hope Against Cancer, which funds research fellowships at the university, had been key to furthering the research.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-1316119/Curry-powder-targets-cancer-cells-resistant-chemotherapy.html#ixzz10zQsBJga>