



The Wellness Family

Dr. John Ferguson Keeps You Informed

Garlic, Onions and More

Hippocrates, the father of Western medicine, once said, "Let food be thy medicine, and medicine be thy food." Progressive parents understand that you don't go to the pharmacy first. While pharmaceuticals have their time and place, there are healthier, alternative options in which to turn. Don't be in a hurry to purchase something over-the-counter, the healthiest options for your children and wellness families may be found in your kitchen.

What are Garlic and Onions?

Falling under the category of allium vegetables, garlic and onions fit in the same class as leeks, scallions, shallots and chives. Actually, the word "allium" is derived from the Greek word for garlic. These vegetables are high in organosulfur compounds, which results in their strong and distinctive flavor and aroma.

Garlic, a native of Central Asia, has historically been prized for both its culinary and medicinal use. Garlic certainly has the strongest, most distinct flavor of the alliums and this hardy perennial grows as bulbs made up of cloves.

Onions originated in the Near East and have been cultivated for thousands of years. The most common onion is the yellow onion. Red onions are good sliced and eaten raw in salads or on sandwiches. Pearl onions, which are most often white, are the smallest of the bulb onions and most popular for boiling or canning.

Health Benefits of Garlic

Of the two, garlic has the highest healing properties, having long been considered one of the world's healthiest foods. It's highly nutritious with very few calories, rich in both vitamin B5 and manganese.

When consumed regularly in a healthy diet, garlic has many medicinal qualities. A 12-week study found that a daily garlic supplement reduced the number of colds by 63%. Additionally, the length of cold symptoms was reduced by 70%. Another recent study found that a high dose of garlic extract can reduce the number of sick days with cold or flu by 61%. For those who catch every cold that goes by, this is good news.

Active compounds of garlic may also reduce blood pressure as well as improve cholesterol levels and help lower the risk of heart disease. Studies have also shown that the antioxidants in garlic may help prevent Alzheimer's and dementia and even help you live longer. At high doses, the sulfur compounds in garlic have been shown to protect against organ damage from heavy metal toxicity and may even improve bone health. Researchers are learning that it also improves insulin sensitivity and other associated metabolic syndromes and can significantly lower fasting blood glucose levels.

Cancer Fighting Properties

Studies have shown that garlic has proven cancer fighting properties since it contains quercetin (a flavonoid with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties), allixin (an antimicrobial substance) and allicin (which promotes cell death, inhibits cell growth, and is a major precursor of sulfur compounds).

The National Cancer Institute has published several studies in the past decade and more, proving a direct link between



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garlic consumption and decreased cancer risks. Garlic may help prevent and even treat liver cancer. A Chinese study recently linked raw garlic consumption with a reduced risk of lung cancer. The American Institute for Cancer Research has reported that garlic could help reduce the risk of stomach, skin, colon and lung cancer. One such study showed that men with the highest intake of garlic and other allium vegetables had a statistically significant lower risk of prostate cancer.

The European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition has found that higher intakes of garlic and onions were associated with the reduced risk of intestinal cancer.

An Iowa Women's Study of more than 40,000 women found that there was a strong association between increased garlic consumption and reduced colon cancer and women who consumed the most garlic had a 50% lower risk than those who consumed the least.

Additional studies from around the world have confirmed a reduced risk of stomach, esophageal, prostate, pancreatic and breast cancers associated with the increased intake of garlic.

Home Remedies

It's clear that consuming garlic and onions has its benefits but their applications as home remedies cannot be ignored.

Onion Poultice - When chopping an onion the eyes can water and the nose will run; this is precisely why the onion is useful as a healing poultice. Onion can improve

circulation and helps to break up congestion. The high sulfur content in onions causes thick mucus to move outward toward the skin.

To create an onion poultice, chop the white or yellow onions finely. To really get the juice to come out place a cloth over the chopped onion and smash it under a cup, then puree it in a blender for 5 to 10 seconds. While this can be used at room temperature, it has also been suggested that the onion can be lightly sautéed with a little water or olive oil until warm.

Onion Broth – The same properties of onions that make them so useful as a poultice, make it invaluable for stomach relief. An upset stomach may commonly be caused by an irritant in the stomach lining resulting in nausea and vomiting.

Cut a white or yellow onion in quarters and boil half of it in a medium sauce pan. Once the onion has begun to fall apart, remove the pieces. What remains is your onion broth. If you are using this for younger children, you can add chicken bouillon to make it more palatable. Drinking a cup of this broth will typically draw the irritant out of the stomach lining. If this is a case of food poisoning or a very serious irritant, there may be additional vomiting, but it will be useful in removing the original irritant.

Garlic Ear Drops – Any parent holding a child that is screaming in pain and tugging at their ear has only one thing on their mind: relieve the pain. Thankfully, this can be done without a visit to the pediatrician or an over-the-counter chemical. Herbal eardrops can be purchased at most health food stores or you can make your own by blending equal parts of garlic and olive oil.

To administer the ear drops, warm a spoon by running it under hot water, pour a few drops of oil onto the spoon to warm the oil, then put two to three drops in each ear while your child is lying on their side. Plug the ear loosely with a cotton ball and repeat two to three times a day for up to four days.

Garlic Juice – During summer months, it is not uncommon to deal with insect, tick and mosquito bites. Garlic juice may help reduce that problem.

Garlic juice is 5 parts water to 1 part garlic. This can be sprayed on the legs and arms as a healthy, natural, chemical-free bug repellent. Strips of cloth soaked in garlic juice and placed strategically around your yard may also help.

If, despite your best efforts, you or your child are bitten by a bug, tick or mosquito, a slice of garlic clove rubbed on the affected area with the juicy side may help reduce swelling and avoid infection due to garlic's antifungal, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. Be careful, however, since it may sting. Young children will find this extremely uncomfortable and particularly irritating.

The Chiropractic Factor

While your Family Wellness Chiropractor has been trained to care for your spine, they recognize that a wellness lifestyle plays an integral part in the overall health of you and your family. When you eat right, exercise and maintain a healthy, wellness lifestyle, you will benefit in many ways, including a strong immune system. Adding garlic and onions to your diet is just one more step in that right direction.

Please note that it is best to make allium vegetables part of your diet, as a whole, and not depend upon supplements. While they may have some benefits, supplements typically contain varying amounts of the compounds that make garlic and onions such a beneficial part of your diet. By eating the vegetables whole, you know that you're getting all their important healthy elements.

Finally, when considering garlic and onions and their medicinal, homeopathic properties it is best to keep in mind that they are antifungal, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory. Any condition or symptom that falls under the category of fungus or bacteria may at least be soothed in some way. Ask your Family Wellness Chiropractor for more information.

This article is not meant to imply that the Doctor of Chiropractic treats or cures any disease.



Dear Patient,
Dr. John is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.

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