



Cayenne

Capsaicin annum, aka chili pepper, aka red pepper is a pungent, hot herb, which originated in the tropics and is mainly used as a culinary seasoning in Asian and Central American cuisine.

Technically cayenne is a berry, the powder is produced by grinding the dried fruit. Cayenne consists of alkaloids including *capsaicin*, the active ingredient that makes it so hot to taste and touch. It is often used internally as a circulatory stimulant but it is mainly used topically as “counter-stimulant” for pain.

That makes Cayenne a very powerful herb, affecting every organ of the body and acting as a natural anti-arthritic, anti-oxidant and anti-cancer remedy. It is known to enhance the immune system, treat asthma, fever, sore throat, digestion, cardiovascular disease, headaches, arthritis, nerve pain and other inflammatory conditions. It is also a great herb for bleeding conditions and wound-healing.

Similar to over-the-counter non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen and to other herbs like ginger, cayenne works on inflammatory pathways, known as Cox-1 and cox-2 pathways, in the body to target and reduce pain and inflammation. Capsaicin, the resin from cayenne pepper, binds to a protein, and initiates the process of pain relief by:

- Suppression of nerve endings
- Release and temporarily depletion of substance P (a neurotransmitter for feeling *pain*)
- Desensitizing our neurons



When cayenne powder is applied topically, an influx of calcium molecules to the area desensitizes our nerves, produces an increased sensitivity to pain and with repeated application it reduces our sensation of pain. Topical cayenne in a cream is absorbed externally through the skin, treating pain locally at the site of application.

Many clinical trials have been done with topical capsaicin cream showing a reduction of pain for *musculoskeletal conditions, post-operative pain, chronic soft tissue pain* and *neuropathic pain*. Mild side effects include temporary burning when applied topically, or increase in tolerance with extended use. It should be used with caution and when handled, hands should be washed thoroughly and avoid contact with eyes, nose or mouth after applying cayenne cream to your skin. It should also be avoided internally (or used with caution) if you have any serious or chronic digestive, liver or kidney disease.

Recommended dose of for topical cream or ointment is typically .025% to .075% applied 3 to 4 times, daily (or follow label directions). For internal use recommended dose is capsule form is typically 1500 mg, daily. In liquid tincture recommended dose is 10-30 drops 2-4 times, daily. Cayenne also may be made into a tea by mixing ½ teaspoon of powder with approximately 1 cup of boiling water, vary depending on taste.

Nate, Customer Service Representative at Cambridge Naturals, used a cayenne product (40,000 Heat Units, two caps – the recommended dose). He took both caps in the morning, with breakfast for two weeks. This is what he had to say about his experience:

“The first day that I took the capsules, I felt a burn in my stomach after about an hour. This shortly subsided and after three days, I noticed that my bowel movements became more regular and the caps were easier for me to assimilate. Basically, it aided in my digestion and I did find the supplement energized the system and it seemed to speed up my metabolism. Also, I have been experiencing some pain and inflammation in both my knees for the last few months. I am on my feet all day at work and while taking the cayenne, I realized that the pain was no longer in the forefront of my mind. I would definitely recommend the capsule form because I tried taking it in liquid tincture and found that its spicy, hot nature could be overwhelming at times.”

DIY: Home Recipes for Cayenne Oil and Tincture for Pain and Inflammation.

Topical Cayenne Oil

1/2 cup ground Cayenne Pepper Powder

1 cup Olive Oil

-Combine Cayenne and Olive Oil in a jar and seal tightly with a lid.

-Let sit for at least 2 weeks.

-Strain with cheesecloth and store in a dark amber dropper bottle.

*-Apply a few drops on painful area as needed.**

**Remember to wash hands thoroughly after applying and avoid contact on or near eyes, nose and mouth.*

Cayenne Tincture

1/8 cup ground Cayenne Pepper Powder

¾ cup vodka

¼ cup water

-Place ground Cayenne Pepper in glass jar.

-Add ¾ cup vodka and ¼ cup of water.

-Seal with tight fitting lid.

-Shake daily for two weeks, store in dark/dry environment.

-Strain with cheesecloth and store in dark amber dropper bottles.

-Use as needed: 1-8 drops, daily by mouth