



# HEALTH TOPIC OF THE WEEK

## 7/18: NSAIDs, Ginger, Turmeric

### NSAID Introduction

You may not recognize the acronym NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), but you've no doubt made use of them at some point. We all have. These medications are commonly used for aches and pains, menstrual cramps, fever reduction, and headaches. Common NSAIDs include aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen. Popular brand names include Advil, Alive, Motrin, Bayer, and Naprosyn.

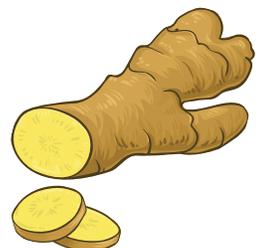
NSAIDs can have unwanted side effects such as heartburn and stomach ulcers. While NSAID medications are often effective in reducing symptoms quickly, they are not great strategies for long-term pain management.

Due to NSAID side effects, many people explore alternative therapies, make dietary changes or take supplements. Unfortunately, their search for alternatives can be quite confusing because the internet is full of misinformation.



### Ginger and turmeric as substitutes for NSAIDs

The "gold standard" of clinical research is a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial. This type of study was performed by comparing ginger to ibuprofen. The purpose was to determine the difference in pain relief between ibuprofen (a popular NSAID), ginger extract, and a placebo in osteoarthritis (the most common form of arthritis).



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A group of 120 patients were randomly assigned to receive either ibuprofen, ginger, or a placebo for one month. Pain and swelling were assessed throughout the trial period. The study found that people who received either ginger or ibuprofen had significantly improved symptoms compared to the placebo group. There was not a significant difference in pain relief between the ibuprofen and ginger groups. **In other words, both ginger and ibuprofen had a similar pain reducing effect.**

Curcumin is the superstar anti-inflammatory compound in turmeric. Turmeric is one of the most popularly used dietary remedies for inflammation. A number of studies have examined its potential for pain relief in arthritis sufferers. To determine the relevance of this research, a meta-analysis was conducted in 2016. It gathered data from all the independent clinical trials that met certain inclusion criteria to ascertain the strength of current evidence.



Eight randomized control trials were included in the review, which supports the use of turmeric to manage arthritis pain. Five of the trials found no significant difference in pain moderation between turmeric and conventional pain medications.

This means that there is compelling research indicating that ginger and turmeric are effective for pain management and inflammation reduction. Significant research indicates that it is equally as effective as ibuprofen/Motrin and other NSAIDs without the side effects. That's great news.

## Supplementation

Ginger and turmeric are two of the most extensively studied ingredients in herbal medicine. Don't care for the taste of ginger or turmeric but want their benefits? Consider supplements. Elite Personal Fitness can provide expert guidance on products and dosages. Call us for a consultation.

While both ginger and turmeric are generally well-tolerated, high doses may cause problems. Ginger may decrease blood clotting and could interfere with blood thinners when used in high amounts. Ginger may impact blood sugar levels. These are just two examples of why it is helpful to have guidance regarding supplements. Feel free to request a consultation.



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