

“The thankful heart opens our eyes to a multitude of blessings that continually surround us.”
– James E. Faust

It's November, which means Thanksgiving is upon us. I think it's a great time to remind ourselves about the importance of being thankful. But we shouldn't just be thankful in the month of November or on Thanksgiving Day. We need to be thankful and grateful each and every day we continue to walk the earth. In May 2020 and December 2022 I wrote about gratitude. The reality is that once you start to take note of the things for which you are grateful, you'll begin to lose sight of the things you think you lack. When you give thanks, you can most likely find comfort in just about everything. But when you complain, you'll likely find comfort in nothing. That's why I love this quote so much. When our hearts are thankful, we'll see blessings all around us that we never noticed before. I hope this month you'll take some time to be thankful. Starting right now, how about saying thank you to someone every day and admitting to yourself that NO ONE gets this far all by ourselves. Gratitude is a powerful catalyst for happiness. It's the spark that can ultimately light a fire of joy in your soul and can transform every negative situation into something positive.

Yours in health,
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Do You Know About Black Garlic?



As I continue my quest to teach you about using food as medicine, I have another good one for you this month. We all know how healthy garlic is. But what many people don't know about is black garlic, which has its own health benefits and antioxidant properties. It's a relative newcomer to the U.S., though its origin dates back centuries in Korea and Egypt and it's long been used in traditional medicine in India and China. What is black garlic? It's essentially fermented garlic, which is cooked for 7 to 10 days at a pretty high temperature (104 to 140 degrees) and high humidity (70%-90%). During that time, it undergoes something called a Maillard reaction, which makes different compounds form. The color changes from off-white to black and it develops what I'd call a sweet taste, with a soft consistency. It also loses the typical garlic smell that can stay with you for days.

Here are just a few of its benefits:

- **Helps reduce blood pressure.** The compounds in black garlic somehow help relax blood vessels, which causes blood pressure to go down. In a 12-week study, 79 high blood pressure patients took 2 or 4 black garlic tablets. Their average blood pressure dropped by 11.8 points. However, I'm not a fan of the tablets and prefer the real thing. A friend's husband was able to come completely off his blood pressure medication after adding black garlic to his daily diet. He actually noticed immediate results the day after taking the black garlic. He monitored his blood pressure twice per day and took ½ head of garlic in the morning and the other ½ of the head in the evening. He kept it in his mouth to melt and chewed it very thoroughly to get good absorption into his system. He's a big guy, which is why he took so much. He also worked with his doctor, who practices alternative medicine, to wean off the blood pressure medicine. This proves you really can use food as medicine.
- **Antioxidant properties.** As a reminder, antioxidants are compounds that help protect cells from oxidative damage, which can ultimately lead to various diseases. Black garlic has a multitude of antioxidant compounds that range from about 40-100 times more than what's provided by fresh raw garlic. Black garlic appears to literally eat away at the free radicals running rampant through the body. These antioxidant properties could also help prevent diabetes, but more research is needed. A study done on rats in 2019 found rats that consumed garlic experienced much lower levels of insulin and glucose in their blood than those rats who didn't eat it.
- **Helps Boost Immunity.** Garlic is very well known for its immune-boosting properties, but black garlic is much less known. It is thought to strengthen the immune system and prevent several viral and bacterial diseases. It also helps improve the health of the respiratory and digestive systems.

- **Anti-inflammatory properties.** Inflammation is the result of what happens when our immune system responds to infection, injury or exposure to some kind of toxin. I have a friend who eats black garlic instead of taking Advil before he goes hiking. It helps with his knee pain. Black garlic may also prevent the inflammation that can have a detrimental effect on memory. There are some scientists who have suggested that this type of inflammation may play a role in the development of Alzheimer's disease, much like aluminum, which I wrote about in my April 2022 newsletter.
- **Helps improve cholesterol.** I came across a 12-week study of 60 people, 30 of whom were given 6 grams of black garlic twice a day before meals. HDL cholesterol, which is the good one, increased over the placebo group. Interestingly, LDL cholesterol (the bad one) and the levels of triglycerides didn't change. But any time HDL is increased, it's a big positive.
- **Helps heal liver damage.** I couldn't find any human tests, but there have been tests on rats with oxidative liver damage that were treated with black garlic. It significantly lowered their markers of injury AND it increased the normal activity and metabolism of the liver. The black garlic also lowered fatty liver deposits in the rats. Additionally, black garlic may help protect the liver from damage that can come from the constant exposure we face of chemicals, prescription medication, alcohol and germs in general. Obviously, human testing is needed, but this sounds promising.
- **Potential anti-cancer properties.** There is some very early research that suggests many compounds in black garlic may have "anti-cancer" effects on cells. It looks as if black garlic can cause cell death, known as apoptosis, and inhibit tumor growth. In fact, researchers found that black garlic extract was toxic to lung, breast, stomach and liver cancer cells within 72 hours. More research is needed so stay tuned for that.
- **Helps with weight loss.** It appears as if a combination of black garlic and exercise can help decrease fat in people trying to lose weight more so than just exercise alone.

You can certainly buy black garlic, but it can be expensive and you need to ensure it's good quality. I recommend making your own. It's super simple to put a number of whole bulbs into a black garlic machine and wait about a week while they slowly cook. Black garlic doesn't appear to cause any major side effects, though RAW garlic eaten in large amounts may increase the risk of bleeding. This could potentially impact people taking blood thinners. Be sure to consult with a trusted doctor.

If you don't want to eat it by itself, which I think is yummy, here are a couple of easy ways to add it to your diet:

- Mix it with soy sauce and add it to a stir fry
- Use it to season soups
- Mix it into cheese dip or hummus
- Use it as a pizza topping or incorporate into spaghetti sauce
- Mix it with olive oil to make a super simple salad dressing

The bottom line is this: eating black garlic is much safer and ultimately more effective than prescription medication to cure what ails you. If you want to use it to lower blood pressure, be sure to check your blood pressure at least daily and work with an alternative doctor to wean off of any prescriptions. Don't ever just stop taking prescription medication.

In closing, since it is almost Thanksgiving, I'd like to wish you peace and happiness as you get together with friends and family. Remember, always be thankful for the little things because even the smallest mountains can hide the most breathtaking views!

Have a wonderful month and Happy Thanksgiving!