



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Cayenne

This information describes the common uses of Cayenne, how it works, and its possible side effects.

Tell your healthcare providers about any dietary supplements you're taking, such as herbs, vitamins, minerals, and natural or home remedies. This will help them manage your care and keep you safe.

What is it?

Cayenne is a kind of hot pepper that has [capsaicin](#) and other nutrients. It is used as a spice in many cultures around the world. Cayenne pepper is also used in traditional medicine to improve digestion (the way your body breaks down food) and blood circulation.

Cayenne supplements come as capsules, powders, and liquid extracts.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

Cayenne is used to:

- Improve digestion
- Improve blood circulation
- Manage type-2 diabetes
- Help you lose weight

Cayenne also has other uses that haven't been studied by doctors to see if they work.

It's generally safe to add cayenne peppers to vegetable or meat dishes. You can also add ground cayenne pepper to soups, curries, or stews. Talk with your healthcare providers before taking cayenne supplements. Herbal supplements are stronger than the herbs you would use in cooking.

They can also interact with some medications and affect how they work. For more information, read the "What else do I need to know?" section below.

What are the side effects?

Side effects of using cayenne may include:

- Sweating
- Eye or nose irritation
- Stomach irritation
- Stomach pain

What else do I need to know?

- Talk to your healthcare provider before using cayenne if you have high blood pressure or heart conditions. It may make these conditions worse.
- In breastfeeding women, using cayenne may turn the baby's skin red.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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