

Capsaicin & Pain

What's the Final Answer?



by Margy Squires

What's your pain? Low back? Neck? Somewhere in-between?

Learn how to fight fire with fire! Capsaicin is the hot ingredient of chili peppers and it is a powerful answer to your kind of pain.

It's estimated that chronic pain affects some 100 million Americans – more than heart disease, diabetes and cancer combined. What's your number? 27 million with osteoarthritis, primarily in knees and hips, interfering with "getting around" every day. 26 million with chronic low back pain, the leading cause of disability under the age of 45. More than 12 million suffer with fibromyalgia, amplified pain that cannot be "turned down".

More facts to know! Respondents from a 2006 pain survey by the American Pain Foundation: 50% feel they have little control over their pain, 60% suffer break-through pain despite medications and more than 70% say pain affects thinking and energy levels. More than 80% lose sleep. In June of 2011, the Institute of Medicine released a consensus report naming chronic pain a national problem and "relieving pain a national priority". Can capsaicin help? Take the quiz and find out!



1 An effective capsaicin product is only available by prescription.

- a) True
- b) False

2 Studies have shown capsaicin starts to reduce pain:

- a) Immediately
- b) 1 year
- c) 1-2 weeks
- d) 6-8 weeks

3 Capsaicin is a natural product and comes from:

- a) Vitamin A
- b) Herbs
- c) Hot peppers
- d) Magnesium

4 Capsaicin works by:

- a) Depleting pain signals
- b) Numbing joints
- c) Increasing blood flow
- d) Improving sleep patterns

5 An effective percentage of capsaicin in a cream product is:

- a) 5-10%
- b) 0.025-0.05%
- c) 2.5-5.0%
- d) 50-100%

6 Conditions helped by capsaicin use include:

- a) Back pain
- b) Fibromyalgia pain
- c) Diabetic neuropathy
- d) All of the above

7 Research supports use of capsaicin for osteo and rheumatoid arthritis pain.

- a) True
- b) False

8 The most common side effect of capsaicin use is:

- a) Blistering
- b) Cooling sensation
- c) Tissue damage
- d) Warming sensation

9 After applying capsaicin, you should not:

- a) Wear light cotton clothing
- b) Take a hot shower
- c) Touch sensitive areas (eyes, broken skin)
- d) b and c

10 Use of *these* helps minimize unintentional spreading of capsaicin:

- a) Gloves
- b) Masks
- c) Ace bandages
- d) Nylon

11 The only indication capsaicin is working is a strong burning sensation.

- a) True
- b) False

12 You should stop using capsaicin once pain relief begins.

- a) True
- b) False



How is your Capsaicin knowledge? Answers on next page.



How did you score?

Answer Key: **1. b.** False. Although originally prescription only, capsaicin is a natural, over the counter product. **2. d.** For those with chronic pain, it may take 6-8 weeks to reduce the pain signal. Apply in thin layers 2-3 times daily until relief begins, then reduce to maintain relief. **3. c.** Capsaicin is the active component of chili peppers. **4. a.** Capsaicin (especially in an absorbable aloe vera base) penetrates skin efficiently and reaches neurons and substance P, the nerve fibers responsible for pain. **5. b.** Most studies find capsaicin in a 0.025-0.05% cream effective on reducing pain and easier to tolerate. **6. d.** Patients with all of these conditions report reduced pain with capsaicin cream usage. **7. a.** True. Many notable institutions including the *British Journal of Pharmacology* have studied the pain reducing effect of natural capsaicin at 0.025% strength. **8. d.** Although it goes on 'warm', capsaicin is safe and will not damage skin. **9. d.** Take caution when applying near the eyes, mouth or any sensitive area. Avoid external heat sources after application. **10. a.** As capsaicin cream works best when applied in thin layers 2-3 times a day, use gloves to reduce risk of getting product in the eyes and sensitive areas. **11. b.** False. Capsaicin goes to work on reducing substance P as soon as it's applied. 'Warming' is not always felt especially with repeat usage. **12. b.** False. However you may reduce the frequency of application to keep substance P under control.



©TyH Publications (M. Squires). For informational purposes only. Consult your health care professional for personal nutrient recommendations.

More Reads in the TyH Online Library:

- ◆ Capsaicin: Clearing the Pain Freeway
- ◆ Capsaicin: Pepper Power for Your Pain

Try To Your Health's **Pain Control Formula™** and put the rub on your pain!

Health
POINTS

Published in *Health Points*. This article is protected by copyright and may not be reproduced without written permission. For information on a subscription, please call TyH Publications, 1-800-801-1406 or write TyH Publications, 12005 N. Saguardo Blvd., Ste. 102, Fountain Hills, AZ 85268. E-mail editor@e-tyh.com. For information on TyH products, visit our website at www.e-tyh.com.