Cinnamon is a brilliant, often overlooked food with great healing qualities. It is widely used in Western and Eastern herbology and in cooking. Most of us have it in our kitchens.

Science tells us that cinnamon is a potent anti-viral, anti-bacterial, and anti-fungal food. Chinese Medicine categorizes cinnamon as a Kidney Yang (warming and drying) tonic that chases cold and damp away. It is great for times when you feel that the cold and damp of fall and winter are getting you down. It is perfect for the person who spends the fall and winter bundling up and wishing for warm weather to return. Combine with ginger for a wonderful and healing tea. Add cardamom and milk and you have Chai tea.

My mother, a Registered Nurse, used to make me cinnamon toast whenever I caught cold. I loved it and believed that it helped me feel better. Based upon its properties, it probably did!

Medicinally, cinnamon is specific for low back pain, nausea, vomiting, arthritis, diarrhea — particularly when they are associated with feeling cold or with cold weather. Cinnamon is specific for colds and flu. Don’t worry that it will constipate you; it also is used for constipation. It is a classic astringent: not only does it “dry up” the excess damp of diarrhea and mucus, it also reduces many types of internal bleeding, including lung, intestinal, nasal, urinary, and uterine. It is helpful for candidiasis and for chronic digestive upset. For any of these conditions, the “standard dose,” taken three times per day, will provide good relief. As a nutritive herb, an herb that also is used as food, it can be taken for long periods of time.

We have new applications for cinnamon today. My father, several years ago, received chemotherapy for a lymphoma. On chemotherapy, he developed the following symptoms: cold, lower back pain, cold hands and feet, low appetite, and bloating. Dad wanted to try natural products but his oncologist said no to herbs. Was that ever frustrating! But the doctor agreed that Dad could take cinnamon, reasoning that it was “just food.” Dad began taking cinnamon capsules, two capsules three times per day. Within 24 hours, Dad’s back pain had diminished eighty percent, his hands and feet were no longer cold, his appetite had begun to pick up and his bloating was reduced. Pretty good for “just food.”

**HOW TO USE IN COOKING:**

**Cinnamon Toast:** Toast bread, spread with butter and spread with honey and cinnamon.

**How to use therapeutically:** Tea, tincture, capsules. As a tea, add a 1/2 teaspoon of powdered cinnamon for each cup of water. Simmer or infuse for 10 minutes. Take 1 cup 1-3 x per day. Note: the cinnamon will fall to the bottom of the cup and will become sludge-like. Drink or discard as you wish.

**Tincture:** 1 dropper (1/2 ml) 1-3x per day. Take directly in your mouth or in water. Can be used to make a quick cup of tea. This is my favorite form.

**Capsule:** 1-2 capsules 1-3x per day.

**Contra-indications:** Avoid taking the standard doses if you are a hot individual — this is the wrong herb for you!

**Susan W. Kramer, Ph.D., AHG, Esq., a therapeutic herbalist and professional member of the American Herbalists Guild, practices and resides in Atlanta, Georgia. She is the author of the award winning book, The Healthy Traveler, and is climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro this month.**

**For more articles on herbal healing visit www.newlifejournal.com**
Copyright of New Life Journal: Carolina Edition is the property of Natural Arts and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder’s express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.