



## ARTHRITIS

**Ginger** (*Zingiber officinale*). In one study, Indian researchers gave three to seven grams (1 1/2 to 3 1/2 teaspoons) of ginger a day to 18 people with osteoarthritis and 28 with rheumatoid arthritis. More than 75 percent of those participating in the study reported at least some relief from pain and swelling. Even after more than two years of taking these high doses of ginger, none of the people reported side effects.

**Pineapple** (*Ananas comosus*). It has long been suggested that bromelain, a chemical in pineapple, can help to prevent inflammation. Athletic trainers have been recommending pineapple to athletes to prevent and treat sports injuries.

**Red pepper** (*Capsicum*, various species). Red pepper contains a pain-relieving called capsaicin, which triggers the body to release endorphins, nature's own opiates. Red pepper also contains aspirin-like compounds known as salicylates. The compounds in red pepper can also help relieve arthritis when applied to the skin. Researchers have discovered that you'll get significant pain relief if you apply capsaicin cream directly to painful arthritic joints four times daily. In one study of this treatment, the capsaicin cream reduced RA pain by more than half. Osteoarthritis pain was reduced by about one-third. Always test a small area first when applying any topical to the skin.

**Stinging nettle** (*Urtica dioica*). Beyond stinging painful joints with nettle branches (urtication), you can steam the fresh leaves and eat them, young leaves are preferable for this. The cooking process takes removes the 'stinging' and they taste pretty good. According to the Rheumatoid Disease Foundation, boron (found in stinging nettle) is effective because it plays a role in helping bones retain calcium. It also has a beneficial influence on the body's endocrine (hormonal) system, and hormones play a role in helping the body maintain healthy bones and joints.

**Willow** (*Salix*, various species) Willow bark was the original herbal aspirin. It contains a chemical called salicin, which the Bayer Company eventually transformed into little white tablets of acetylsalicylic acid--the painkilling drug called aspirin that so many people with arthritis take daily.