

## Health benefits of cinnamon twigs

Besides its beautiful aroma and delicious flavour, cinnamon (Gui Zhi/Ramulus Cinnamomi Cassiae) is also known for its therapeutic benefits in many cultures.

It is abundant in many Jamaican marketplaces and a staple in Chinese herbal medicine, primarily used for its benefits with some gynaecological problems, joint pains and mild cases of the flu.

**Gynaecological benefits** Cinnamon twigs help to warm and promote the flow of blood and qi (energy) in the blood vessels of the uterus. This is in cases of stagnation of the free flow of qi in the female reproductive system accompanied by symptoms of cold, notably in women who get cold easily. It is popularly used in a variety of herbal formulas to ease menstrual pain. It is also used in formulas to break up small abdominal masses such as fibroids, cysts and in mild cases of endometriosis. These formulas are usually administered by a trained herbalist.

**Joint benefits** Perhaps less known is the use of cinnamon twigs in aiding joint discomforts, particularly those made worse by cold weather, this is because of its warming nature and its function in dispersing cold. Mild joint and limb pain accompanied by slight heaviness, swelling and stiffness can be aided by this herb, especially in the shoulders. It is very helpful in cases of mild arthritis.

**Additionally**, the twig has a diuretic effect in the body, as it assists in draining fluid accumulation.

**Respiratory benefits** In cases of colds or the flu in which the natural defences of the body have been compromised, particularly in cases where there is also sweating and weakness, cinnamon twigs are used to restore the protective qi levels of the body and aid in a speedy recovery. In this case, it is best to begin using this herb in the early stages.

**Herb selection** In the selection of any herb or fruit, quality is important. Ensure that it is free of pesticides and other chemicals which may be harmful. Good quality twigs are fragrant and have a brownish red colour.

**Tea preparation & dosage** 1. Boil about 10g of cinnamon twigs in approximately four cups of water for 30 minutes. 2. This tea may be taken up to three times daily over the course of one day.

**Caution** As with any food or herbal tea being ingested, persons with certain pre-existing conditions will need to exercise caution or not use at all. It is not recommended for use in persons experiencing fevers, 'hot flash-type' symptoms and vomiting. It should be taken with caution during pregnancy or heavy menstruation.

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