

Six Natural Alternatives to Ibuprofen

The saying used to be, “Take two aspirin and call me in the morning,” but many people turn to ibuprofen to relieve inflammation, pain, and fever. This nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID), available both over the counter and by prescription, is commonly used to treat arthritis, menstrual symptoms, headache, general aches and pains, and various inflammatory conditions.

Side effects of ibuprofen

Although many people think of ibuprofen as being rather benign, it is associated with an increased risk of [heart and circulation problems](#), including stroke and heart attack, as well as [gastrointestinal problems](#), such as bleeding or perforation of the stomach or intestinal tract. These risks increase the longer you take the drug, although the length of time until it affects any one individual varies depending on their overall health, use of other medications, age, and other factors.

Natural alternatives to ibuprofen

Many studies have been done on various natural pain killers and anti-inflammatories that can be used as alternatives to ibuprofen. They generally have mild to no side effects. Here are a few you may want to consider. You should always consult a knowledgeable health-care professional before starting a new treatment program.

Boswellia: This anti-inflammatory remedy comes from the [Boswellia serrata](#) tree that grows in India. The anti-inflammatory properties of boswellia are attributed to the boswellic acids that it contains. These acids improve blood flow to the joints and prevent inflammatory white cells from entering damaged tissue. Also known as “Indian frankincense,” boswellia is available as a supplement and a topical cream. For pain and inflammation, a suggested dose is 450 to 750 mg daily for three to four weeks.

Capsaicin: The active component of chili peppers, [capsaicin](#) is often used topically to nerve, muscle, and joint pain. It works by interfering with substance P, a chemical that helps transmit pain signals to the brain. It is available as a topical cream or gels in several different potencies (most often, 0.025% to 0.075%) and is usually applied three to four times daily. It can cause some stinging and burning initially, but it typically subsides with use.

Cat’s claw: *Uncaria tomentosa*, or [cat’s claw](#), also known as *una de gato*, grows in South America. It contains an anti-inflammatory agent that blocks the production of the hormone prostaglandin, which contributes to inflammation and pain. Suggested doses are 250 to 1,000 mg capsules one to three times daily. Taking too high a dose may cause diarrhea.

Curcumin: [Curcumin](#) is a component of the herb turmeric, and it is a potent painkiller that can block proteins in the body that cause inflammation and also stops the neurotransmitter called substance P from sending pain message to the brain. Studies show that curcumin is effective in easing the chronic pain of rheumatoid arthritis. A suggested dose is 400 to 600 mg of curcumin taken three times daily for pain and inflammation.

Omega-3 fatty acids: The [omega-3 fatty acids](#) have anti-inflammatory properties that have proven beneficial for people who suffer with arthritis, other inflammatory joint conditions, and inflammatory bowel diseases. Omega-3s also reduce cardiovascular risk, which is especially helpful for people with rheumatoid arthritis, which carries an increased risk for cardiovascular disease. A suggested dose of omega-3 fatty acids as fish oil is 1,000 mg daily.

White willow bark: This herb is the predecessor of aspirin. [White willow bark](#) contains salicin, which converts to salicylic acid in the stomach. White willow bark is much less irritating to the stomach than the synthetic drug, aspirin, while it works to relieve pain, inflammation, and fever. A suggested dose is 1 to 2 dropperfuls of white willow bark tincture daily.

Reference website: <http://www.examiner.com/examiner/x-2994-Phoenix-Alternative-Medicine-Examiner~y2009m5d30-Six-natural-alternatives-to-ibuprofen>