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### What is Saffron:

is a spice derived from the flower of *Crocus sativus*, commonly known as the "saffron crocus". The vivid crimson stigma and styles, called threads, are collected and dried for use mainly as a seasoning and coloring agent in food.

it is believed that saffron originated in Iran.

It contains a carotenoid pigment, crocin, which imparts a rich golden-yellow hue to dishes and textiles. Its recorded history is attested in a 7th-century BC Assyrian botanical treatise and has been traded and used for thousands of years. In the 21st century, Iran produces some 90% of the world total for saffron.

Saffron is a spice from the *Crocus sativus* flower, which is a cousin of the lily. The saffron derives from the stigma and styles — called threads — within the flower itself.

Saffron is very expensive due to the difficulty of harvesting it. Farmers must harvest the delicate threads from each flower by hand.

They then heat and cure the threads to bring out the flavor of the saffron. This extra labor makes saffron one of the most expensive spices in the world.





## What are the health benefits of saffron?

Saffron is a spice with a strong fragrance and distinctive color. The spice is also rich in antioxidants, which may have many health benefits.

### Providing antioxidants:

Most of the health claims surrounding saffron relate to its high levels of specific antioxidants.

According to a 2015 review Trusted Source, the main active antioxidants include:

- crocin
- picrocrocin
- safranal
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Other compounds include kaempferol and crocetin.

These antioxidants help fight against oxidative stress and free radicals in the body.

As oxidative stress and free radicals play a role in the development of many health conditions, including cancer and heart disease, antioxidants such as these may help protect a person's health.

### Preventing nervous system disorders:

The antioxidants in saffron may play a role in protecting the body from disorders affecting the nervous system.

People with mild-to-moderate Alzheimer's who took saffron for 22 weeks had cognitive improvements that were comparable with those of people who took the drug donepezil, and they also experienced fewer side effects.

While this is early evidence to support the medicinal use of saffron, researchers suggested that future clinical trials could help back up these claims.



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### Boosting mood:

There is also growing evidence that saffron may help improve mood and be a useful addition to treatment for depression.

A study in the Journal of Behavioral and Brain Science found that a saffron extract increased dopamine levels in the brain without changing the levels of other brain hormones, such as serotonin.

Other research Trusted Source suggests that taking 30 milligrams (mg) of saffron each day could cause similar effects as drugs that treat mild-to-moderate depression, such as imipramine and fluoxetine.

### Promoting libido:

Saffron may also increase sex drive and sexual function in both males and females.

Researchers Trusted Source reviewed the effects of saffron on male infertility problems and noted that while it had a positive effect on erectile dysfunction and overall sex drive, it did not change the viability of the semen.

An older study from 2012 Trusted Source looked at the effects in women who had reported experiencing sexual dysfunction due to taking the antidepressant fluoxetine.

Women who took 30 mg of saffron each day for 4 weeks had increased sexual desire and vaginal lubrication compared with those who took a placebo instead.

### Reducing PMS symptoms:

Saffron may also act to reduce the symptoms of premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

The authors of a 2015 review looked at the research on saffron and symptoms of PMS. Women between the ages of 20 and 45 years who took 30 mg of saffron each day had fewer symptoms than those who took a placebo.

Additionally, women who simply smelled saffron for 20 minutes had lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol in their system, which may also contribute to a reduction in PMS symptoms.



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### Promoting weight loss:

There is also some evidence to suggest that saffron may help promote weight loss and curb the appetite.

A study in the Journal of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Research Trusted Source found that taking a saffron extract helped people with coronary artery disease reduce their body mass index (BMI), total fat mass, and waist circumference.

People who took the supplement also had a reduced appetite compared with those in the placebo group.

### Side effects and risks:

In general, the consumption of saffron carries little risk. Cooking with saffron is a great way to add it to the diet without the risk of consuming too much of this spice.

Taking up to 1.5 grams of saffron each day is generally safe but eating too much can be toxic. Researchers consider 5 g to be a toxic dose.

Very high dosages may be more dangerous for certain groups of people. For instance, the authors of one study Trusted Source note that pregnant women should avoid having more than 5 g per day of saffron as it has a stimulating effect on the uterus.

Allergic reactions are a possibility. Anyone who experiences symptoms of an allergic reaction after taking saffron should see a doctor.



If you need more information, please, don't hesitate to contact us.

**We remain at your service**