

Heat in chili peppers can ease sinus problems, research shows

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(Medical Xpress) -- Hot chili peppers are known to make people "tear up," but a new study led by University of Cincinnati allergy researcher Jonathan Bernstein, MD, found that a nasal spray containing an ingredient derived from hot chili peppers (*Capsicum annuum*) may help people "clear up" certain types of sinus inflammation.

The study, which appears in the August 2011 edition of *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology*, compares the use of the *Capsicum annuum* nasal spray to a placebo nasal spray in 44 subjects with a significant component of nonallergic rhinitis (i.e., nasal congestion, sinus pain, sinus pressure) for a period of two weeks.

Capsicum annuum contains capsaicin, which is the main component of [chili peppers](#) and produces a hot sensation. Capsaicin is also the active ingredient in several topical medications used for temporary pain relief. It is approved for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and is available over the counter.

"Basically, we concluded that the spray was safe and effective on non-allergic rhinitis," Bernstein says of the study which showed that participants who used a [nasal spray](#) with *Capsicum* reported a faster onset of action or relief, on average within a minute of using the spray, than the control group.

Non-allergic rhinitis is an upper respiratory condition not caused by allergies but instead caused by environmental factors such as weather,

household chemicals or perfumes; however, there are some people who have no triggers or don't know what triggers are causing the inflammation, Bernstein says.

This is the first controlled trial where capsaicin was able to be used on a continuous basis to control symptoms. It is considered a significant advance, "because we don't really have good therapies for non-allergic rhinitis," says Bernstein, adding that in previous trials the ingredient was too hot to administer without anesthesia.

Provided by University of Cincinnati

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