Can an ordinary cooking condiment used in cooking spicy, hot dishes really stop a heart attack or stroke? These doctors say it can.

Cayenne pepper (also called capsicum frutescens) is a red, hot chili pepper used primarily for flavoring dishes, but it has also been used for medical purposes for centuries. This stimulating herb has been widely used all over the world to treat a variety of health conditions, including heart disease, poor circulation, weak digestion, chronic pain, sore throat, headaches and toothache, among others.

Cayenne pepper derives its medicinal properties from a resin-like substance known as capsaicin. Capsaicin is an ingredient that has thermogenic properties, that is, it increases body temperature and is the greatest blood circulation stimulant known. It doesn't cause palpitations, hyperactivity or an increase in blood pressure that most other stimulants cause. It also provides temporary relief of pain, which is why it is used in pain-reducing topical preparations such as Capsazin-P, Zostrix-HP, Dolorac, R-Gel and others.

Cayenne has steadily gained the reputation of being a wonder herb over the past few decades. Dr. Richard Schulze, a notable medical herbalist and naturopath, stated, “If you master only one herb in your life, master cayenne pepper. It is more powerful than any other.”

Perhaps the most important recognition that cayenne has gained in recent years has been its ability to stop a heart attack or stroke. Dr. Richard Anderson, author of “Cleanse & Purify Thyself,” reported that one of his fellow doctors rushed out into the parking lot to attend to a man who had died of a heart attack while parking his car. The doctor put cayenne tincture into the mouth of the man, and within a few minutes, the man’s heart started beating again.

According to Dr. John Christopher, pioneer of herbal medicine, “In 35 years of practice, and working with
the people and teaching, I have never on house calls lost one heart attack patient and the reason is, whenever I go in—if they are still breathing—I pour down them a cup of cayenne tea (a teaspoon of cayenne in a cup of hot water), and within minutes they are up and around."

Cayenne has been shown to stop heart attacks in as little as 30 seconds. Perhaps the most well-known anecdotal evidence of this involved a 90-year-old man in Oregon who had a massive heart attack. When the medics arrived at his home, he was pronounced dead. His daughter was able to administer cayenne extract into his mouth, and within a few minutes, he regained consciousness. Thereafter, he was rushed to the hospital, and while he was in a semi-conscious state, his daughter continued giving him the cayenne extract. By the time they arrived at the hospital, he had fully recovered and insisted that he be taken home so that he could mow his lawn! When the doctor asked the daughter what she had given him, and she told him it was cayenne, the doctor declared it was the closest thing to a miracle he had ever seen.

The capsaicin in cayenne pepper is unrivalled in its ability to boost circulation and increase heart action. It has a mechanism of action that has the extraordinary ability to enhance cardiovascular performance while actually lowering blood pressure. Capsaicin has an energizing effect on the entire cardiovascular system.

Dr. Anderson believes that cayenne greatly strengthens the heart and could possibly even prevent heart attacks. He routinely carries capsules of cayenne with him in the car and whenever he goes hiking, mountain climbing or backpacking. “You never know when you may find someone having a heart attack,” he says.

Other doctors, however, insist that cayenne capsules are not as effective as cayenne tinctures or cayenne powder in emergency situations, such as in the event of a heart attack or stroke. If a heart attack or stroke should occur and the person is conscious, it is suggested that 5 to 10 droppersfull of cayenne pepper tincture (or 1 teaspoon of cayenne powder in a glass of hot water) be administered into the mouth, and repeated every 15 minutes until the crisis has passed.

Disclaimer: The information in this report is based upon research conducted by the author, unless otherwise noted. This information is not intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified health care professional and is not intended as medical advice. It is intended as a sharing of knowledge and information from the research and experience of the author. The author encourages you to make your own health care decisions based upon your research and in partnership with a qualified health care professional.