

SPICE UP YOUR HEALTH IN OLD AGE.

The elderly we know suffer more from pneumonia than do other age groups. This may, at least partially, be accounted for by a reduced resistance to pneumococcal infection caused by an immunity defence system weakened by other infections.

It is known that an infection can be triggered by small food particles which enter the lungs via the trachea due to a weakening and slowing down of the swallowing reflex which allows tiny food particles time to be diverted from the oesophagus into the trachea.

A study undertaken at the Tokoku University School of Medicine shows that the naturally occurring chemical Capsaicin, which is present in red peppers speeds up the swallowing reflex which effectively reduces the time in which the food particles may enter the respiratory system.

A study involving 64 volunteers whose average age was 82 was undertaken. At the start all participating volunteers had the time of their personal swallowing reflex timed. For the entire group the average time was more than 5 seconds. During the test period half the group were given capsaicin and half were given a placebo. After 4 weeks the reflex timings of all volunteers in the placebo control group remained unchanged whereas those given Capsaicin showed a reduction in their reflex timing of a significant 30% to an average of 3.5 seconds.