

# CAPSAICIN – CURE OR POISON?

## Summary

Capsaicin, an organic compound produced by plants from the *Capsicum* family, is responsible for the spicy taste of pepper. It is widely applied in the medicine and as the food additive. The biological activities and pharmacological actions have been widely studied for the latest years. Capsaicin acts on vanilloid receptors located in dorsal root and trigeminal ganglia, which is perceived as pain and heat. This substance exerts an influence on thermoregu-

lation in organism, causing activation of both heat dissipation and production processes. Capsaicin is widely used as analgesic, and its chemopreventive and anticarcinogenic activity is now extensively studied. On the other hand, capsaicin is also used as a repellent against mammals and insects. This review summarizes recent information about molecular targets and the usage of capsaicin.