

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

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FOR THE MEDIA

Quercetin has not been shown to treat cancer or other diseases.

Quercetin belongs to a family of compounds called bioflavonoids, which are largely responsible for the bright colors and medicinal activities of many plants. Quercetin is the most common bioflavonoid that people consume, and is the most active of the bioflavonoids in laboratory experiments. It is known to act as an antioxidant, neutralizing free radicals that can cause cellular and DNA damage. Quercetin is thought to have anti-inflammatory properties by inhibiting the release of substances that mediate the inflammatory response, such as histamine. Presently, considerable laboratory data support the concept of quercetin as an anticancer compound, but it is still unclear from clinical trials whether this effect occurs in the human body.

Because of its antioxidant effects, quercetin may interfere with the actions of certain chemotherapy drugs.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- To treat allergies and inflammation

Laboratory studies show an anti-inflammatory effect of quercetin, including inhibition of histamine release. Clinical trials have not been conducted.

- To prevent and treat cancer

Laboratory studies indicate anticancer activity of quercetin against a wide range of cancer cell types. A systematic review showed that it does not help reduce the risk of ovarian cancer.

- To treat heart disease

One study showed that quercetin, in combination with red wine extract, lowered LDL oxidation (which may contribute to atherosclerosis) in healthy volunteers. However, it is unclear how much of this effect was due to quercetin alone, and other similar studies have not found the same effect.

What else do I need to know?

Do Not Take if:

- You are taking drugs that are substrates of cytochrome P450 3A4 or 2C19 enzymes: Quercetin may increase the risk of side effects of such drugs. Clinical relevance is not known.
- Losartan (medication to treat hypertension): Following concomitant administration, quercetin increased the systemic exposure of losartan in a murine model. Clinical relevance is not known.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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