

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

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Cancer Center

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FOR THE MEDIA

Acai has antioxidant effects, but it has not been shown to treat or prevent cancer.

Acai is the fruit of a palm mainly found in South America. The berries and seeds contain compounds called flavonoids that have antioxidant effects. Some laboratory studies suggest acai may reduce cholesterol, prevent diseases of the heart and blood vessels, and cause programmed cell death in leukemia cells. However, human studies are needed to confirm these effects.

Consumption of contaminated acai fruit with insects carrying *Trypanosoma cruzii*, a protozoan that causes Chagas disease, resulted in 178 cases of acute disease.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- To prevent cancer

Preclinical studies suggest that flavonoids present in acai fruit have antioxidant properties. However, there are no human studies to suggest that acai can help prevent cancer.

- To prevent heart disease and stroke

In vitro studies show that acai fruit may be useful, but human data are lacking.

What else do I need to know?

Patient Warnings:

Drinking unprocessed acai juice should be avoided, as it has been linked to an illness called Chagas disease.

Special Point:

Theoretically, acai may interfere with the actions of certain chemotherapy drugs due to its antioxidant effects.

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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