



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Bromelain

This information describes the common uses of Bromelain, how it works, and its possible side effects.

Tell your healthcare providers about any dietary supplements you're taking, such as herbs, vitamins, minerals, and natural or home remedies. This will help them manage your care and keep you safe.

## What is it?

**Bromelain has anti-inflammatory properties, but has not been shown to treat or prevent cancer.**

Bromelain is an enzyme that breaks down protein molecules and is obtained from pineapple stems. In lab experiments, bromelain prevented blood clotting and decreased inflammation.

Studies in humans are limited. When used topically in clinical settings, it helps remove dead and damaged tissue from burns. Although bromelain is sometimes taken orally to help digestion and absorption, studies are lacking. It also has not been studied for effects on cancer in humans.

Bromelain may increase the absorption of some antibiotics.

# What are the potential uses and benefits?

- **To treat arthritis**

Lab studies suggest bromelain can reduce inflammation, but results from clinical trials are mixed.

- **To treat skin burns**

Studies in humans support this use in clinical settings.

- **To prevent and treat cancer**

Lab studies suggest bromelain has anticancer activities, but these effects have not been studied in humans.

- **To improve circulation**

Lab studies suggest that bromelain can prevent blood clots, but there is no proof from clinical trials that it can treat circulatory disorders.

- **To reduce swelling**

Small clinical studies suggest that bromelain helps reduce swelling.

## What are the side effects?

Allergic reactions have been reported.

## What else do I need to know?

### Do Not Take if:

- You are taking **warfarin or other blood thinners**: Preclinical studies suggest bromelain may increase the risk of bruising and bleeding.
- You are taking **tetracycline antibiotics**: Bromelain may increase blood and urine levels of these drugs.

### Special Point:

Bromelain may increase blood levels of antibiotics by increasing their absorption in the intestine.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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