Ready to start planning your care? Call us at 800-525-2225 to make an appointment.
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Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

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Give to MSK

D-limonene has not been shown to treat or prevent cancer.

D-limonene is derived from the peels of citrus fruits. It showed anti-inflammatory, wound healing and anticancer effects in laboratory studies. D-limonene was shown to alter the signaling pathways within cancer cells in a way that stops cancer cells from multiplying and causes their death (this is called “apoptosis”). In animal models, D-limonene slowed the growth of pancreatic, stomach, colon, skin, and liver cancers. It also slowed formation of tumors and their progression in animals exposed to cancer-causing substances. However, these anticancer effects have not been shown in humans.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- To prevent and treat cancer
  An epidemiological study reported an inverse relationship between citrus peel consumption and squamous cell carcinoma, but such effects were not observed in early clinical trials.
- To treat heartburn and gastroesophageal reflux

Evidence is lacking to support this claim.

What are the side effects?

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Allergic skin rash
- Asthma

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 to search our virtual library.
D-limonene - Last updated on April 14, 2023

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