

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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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 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.

D-limonene - Last updated on April 14, 2023

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