

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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What is it?

Lab studies suggest diindolylmethane (DIM) has anticancer effects, but clinical data are limited.

Diindolylmethane is a compound found in cruciferous vegetables including broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower. Laboratory studies suggest anti-inflammatory and anticancer effects, but data in humans are quite limited. A few clinical studies suggest DIM may benefit patients with castration-resistant prostate cancer or help reverse abnormal cervical changes in cells. However, more studies are needed to determine safety and effectiveness, as DIM may affect the levels of certain hormones in the body.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- Cancer prevention

Preliminary studies suggest that DIM may benefit patients with castration-resistant prostate cancer and help reverse cervical intraepithelial neoplasia, but additional studies are needed.

- Estrogen metabolism

DIM supplementation resulted in changes in estrogen urinary metabolites in post menopausal women with a history of early stage breast cancer.

- Detoxification

There is no scientific evidence to back this claim.

What are the side effects?

Case reports

Visual impairment: Occurred in a healthy female patient after excessive daily intake of DIM for 2 months. Symptoms resolved 8 weeks after discontinuing use of DIM.

Rash: Along with an increased white blood cell count following use of DIM.

What else do I need to know?

Patient Warnings:

Because of potential hormonal effects, women who are pregnant, planning to get pregnant, or nursing should not take DIM. Women who use birth control pills should consult with a healthcare professional before taking this product.

Do Not Take if:

- You are pregnant, planning to get pregnant, nursing or use birth control pills: DIM may have hormone modulation effects.
- You are taking CYP450 substrate drugs: DIM may make them less effective.
- You are taking MDR1 substrate drugs: DIM may reduce their effectiveness.

Special Point:

Both DIM and I3C may alter estrogen urinary metabolite profiles in women. However, their effects on breast cancer risk are unknown.

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.

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