Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

Beta-elemene

This information describes the common uses of Beta-elemene, 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?

Beta-elemene has shown anticancer activity in laboratory studies. More research is needed to study its effects in humans.

Beta-elemene is a compound found in plants such as celery, mint, and in many others used in traditional medicine. Although the pure form is not used as dietary supplement, some cancer patients use herbs high in beta-elemene as treatment. Beta-elemene was shown to prevent growth of cancer cells in laboratory cells by different mechanisms. A few poorly designed studies done in humans showed that it may improve quality of life in cancer patients. It is unclear if raw herbs containing beta-elemene have the same effects in humans. More research is needed.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- **Cancer Treatment**
  Laboratory studies indicate that beta-elemene can stop the growth of cancer cells. A few studies have been done in humans but the results are not

reliable. Larger, well designed clinical trials are needed.

What are the side effects?

- Beta-elemene was found to inhibit human sperm function by affecting sperm vitality, in vitro. Clinical significance is not known.

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.

Beta-elemene - Last updated on August 9, 2023