



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Pectin

This information describes the common uses of Pectin, 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?

Data on whether pectin can help various conditions are preliminary, and more studies are needed.

Pectin is a soluble fiber present in most plants, but concentrated in the peel and pulp of citrus fruits such as lemons, oranges, and grapefruits, as well as apples. Modified Citrus Pectin (MCP) is obtained by changing pectin so it may be better absorbed by the body.

Lab studies suggest pectin and MCP have various properties, but human studies are limited. Preliminary data suggest pectin and MCP may be helpful for treating diarrhea and lowering cholesterol. Pectin causes side effects such as abdominal cramps and diarrhea, and may interfere with the absorption of some types of supplements.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- **Diarrhea**

Preliminary data suggest pectin may be helpful in treating diarrhea in children with persistent diarrhea.

- **High cholesterol**

Diets supplemented with fiber can benefit patients with high blood cholesterol.

- **Cancer**

Although pectin has been promoted for reducing colon cancer risk and damage from radiation therapy, there is insufficient evidence to support these uses. In a small nonrandomized study, MCP increased the doubling time of prostate-specific antigen in patients with prostate cancer, but more studies are needed.

What are the side effects?

- Abdominal cramps
- Diarrhea

What else do I need to know?

Do Not Take if:

- You are taking **lovastatin** for high cholesterol: Pectin may inhibit the action of lovastatin and may increase LDL cholesterol.
- You are taking **carotenoid and alpha-tocopherol supplements**: Pectin interferes with their absorption.

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.

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