

Grapefruit Juice and Drug Interactions

Grapefruit and grapefruit juice provide healthy nutrients such as vitamin C and lycopene. However, there are some chemicals in grapefruit that interfere with the enzymes that break down certain drugs in our digestive system. This can result in excessively high levels of these drugs in our blood and an increased risk of serious side effects.

The exact chemicals in grapefruit that cause this interaction aren't known, but they are present in the pulp, peel and juice of the grapefruit. Therefore, any grapefruit product should be avoided if you are taking any of the drugs that are affected. If you avoid grapefruit, you also should avoid tangelos, a hybrid grapefruit, and Seville oranges, a type of bitter orange often used to make marmalade and compotes as they may have a similar effect.

Following are some of the drugs known to have serious interactions with grapefruit products:

Drug Name	Type of Drug
Carbamazepine (Carbatrol, Tegretol)	An anti-seizure medication
Buspirone (BuSpar), clomipramine (Anafranil) and sertraline (Zoloft)	Antidepressants
Diazepam (Valium), triazolam (Halcion)	Tranquilizers
Felodipine (Plendil), nifedipine (Adalat, Procardia), nimodipine (Nimotop), nisoldipine (Sular) and possibly verapamil (Isoptin, Verelan)	Calcium channel blockers used to treat high blood pressure
Saquinavir (Invirase) and indinavir (Crixivan)	HIV medications
Simvastatin (Zocor), lovastatin (Mevacor, Altoprev) and atorvastatin (Lipitor), simvastatin-ezetimibe (Vytorin)	Medications to treat high cholesterol
Cyclosporine (Neoral, Sandimmune), tacrolimus (Prograf) and sirolimus (Rapamune)	Immunosuppressant drugs
Amiodarone (Cordarone)	A drug used to treat and prevent abnormal heart rhythms (arrhythmias)
Methadone	Pain relief medication
Sildenafil (Viagra)	Erectile dysfunction medication

If you take any of these drugs, you should completely avoid grapefruit products, including tangelos and Seville oranges, unless otherwise directed by your doctor. Waiting to take these medications – even up to 24 hours – after you have a grapefruit product will not prevent an interaction.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have concerns about the effect of grapefruit products on any of the medications you take.

Reference: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/food-and-nutrition>