

Pomegranate Slows Prostate Cancer

Post-Treatment PSA Increase Levels Off With Daily Pomegranate Juice

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July 5, 2006 -- A glass of pomegranate juice a day may keep [prostate cancer](#) prostate cancer recurrence away, UCLA researchers report.

Treatment cures two out of three men with early prostate [cancer](#) cancer. But after treatment, a third of men have rising levels of prostate-specific antigen -- PSA -- in their blood. Of these men, 34% of them progressed to deadly, metastatic prostate cancer within 15 years. The faster PSA levels double, the sooner a man is likely to see his prostate cancer return.

Cancer-fighting chemicals are found in many foods. One food rich in these kinds of chemicals is pomegranate juice. Might pomegranate juice slow -- or even reverse -- this post-treatment increase in PSA? Yes, find UCLA researcher Allan Pantuck, MD, and colleagues.

Pantuck's team enrolled 46 men in a study funded by the owners of POM Wonderful Co., the maker of the pomegranate juice used in the study. The men all had detectable PSA after cancer treatment; all drank 8 ounces of pomegranate juice every day.

The men's overall PSA doubling time was nearly four times slower after they began drinking pomegranate juice. Sixteen of the 46 patients had a decrease in PSA levels -- and in four, PSA levels dropped by half.

"I was surprised when I saw such an improvement in PSA numbers," Pantuck said, in a news release. "This is not a cure, but we may be able to change the way prostate cancer grows."

Pantuck says that pomegranate juice may allow 65- to 70-year-old men treated for prostate cancer to outlive their risk of dying from their cancer.

Prostate cancer patients with rising PSA levels usually opt for treatment with drugs that block testosterone. This "chemical castration" can have serious side effects, including bone loss, [depression](#)depression, and sexual dysfunction. It's possible that drinking pomegranate juice can delay the need for such treatments.

Pantuck says that some men in the study have been drinking pomegranate juice -- and keeping their PSA levels stable -- for more than three years.

"The juice seems to be working," he notes.

Because of these promising results, pomegranate juice will be studied in a major, placebo-controlled clinical trial at 10 U.S. medical centers.

The study findings appear in the July 1 issue of *Clinical Cancer Research*.

SOURCES: Pantuck, A.J. *Clinical Cancer Research*, July 1, 2006; pp 4018-4026. News release, Jonsson Cancer Center.