



The grapefruit effect

Grapefruit can interact with your drugs. And your doctor may not be aware of it. An article in the Canadian Medical Association Journal points out that drug interactions with grapefruit were noted more than 20 years ago.

Recently, more and more commonly prescribed newer drugs are found to interact with grapefruit (the fruit and the juice) and can cause serious side effects. Problems can occur even if the grapefruit is eaten hours before taking certain medications.

Adverse effects include sudden death, acute kidney failure, respiratory failure, gastrointestinal bleeding, bone marrow suppression in ill people, and other serious side effects.

There are more than 85 drugs that may interact with grapefruit, and 43 can have serious side effects. Other citrus fruits such as Seville oranges, often used in marmalade, limes and pomelos also contain the active ingredients (furanocoumarins) that interact with grapefruit.

The best advice is to discuss all your medications with your doctor and pharmacist and ask about interactions with grapefruit.