Common Food and Drug Interactions

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Food and Drug Interactions

- Most people are aware that medications can interact with each other. Did you also know that certain medications may also interact with the foods that you eat?
- Food can
  - Decrease the amount of drug absorbed by the body
  - Increase the amount of drug absorbed by the body
  - Delay the absorption of the medication
  - Interfere with the body's ability to metabolize (break down) a drug
  - Prevent or delay the body from eliminating medications

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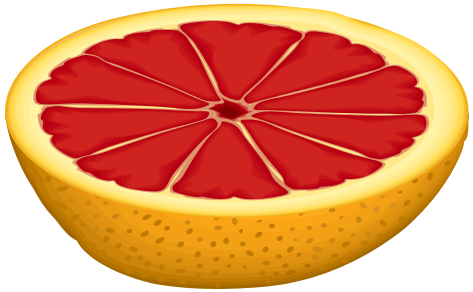
Grapefruit Juice

- Certain chemicals in grapefruit products prevent your liver and intestines from metabolizing drugs
- This leads to increased levels of drug in your body
- Commonly affected drugs include:
  - Certain drugs for abnormal heart rhythms…amiodarone, dronedarone
  - Antihistamines…diphenhydramine
  - Cholesterol medications…simvastatin, lovastatin, atorvastatin
  - Cough suppressants…dextromethorphan
  - Drugs for anxiety…buspirone, alprazolam, diazepam, triazolam
  - Medications for organ transplant patients…cyclosporine, tacrolimus, sirolimus
  - Blood pressure drugs…nicardipine, nifedipine, felodipine, etc.
  - HIV medicines…saquinavir, ritonavir, nelfinavir, etc.
  - Certain hormones…estrogen, methylprednisolone
  - Seizure medications…carbamazepine
  - Sleeping medications…trazodone, zolpidem, zaleplon
  - Cancer medications…astemizole, paclitaxel, finasteride



Talk to your doctor or pharmacist regarding other medications that interact with grapefruit.

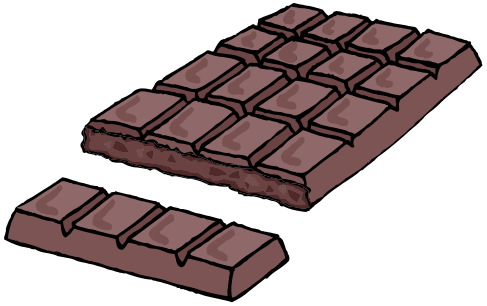
Licorice

- Licorice can decrease levels of potassium in your body making it potentially dangerous to eat licorice when taking
  - Digoxin (heart medication)
  - Diuretics (water pills)

- Licorice can also increase your blood pressure and reduce the effects of blood pressure drugs

Caffeine

- Caffeine is present in many drinks and some foods, especially chocolate. Some drinks that contain caffeine are:
  - Coffee
  - Tea
  - Colas and other sodas
  - Energy drinks



- Caffeine is a stimulant. This means that it causes wakefulness and may increase your blood pressure and heart rate.
- Some drugs that interact with caffeine include:
  - Theophylline and albuterol (asthma medications)
  - Certain cold or allergy products, especially decongestants
  - Other stimulant drugs, such as Ritalin or Adderall
  - Blood pressure medications
  - Sedative drugs (sleeping pills)

- Caffeine may also increase the level of ciprofloxacin, an antibiotic used to treat infections, in your body.

Alcohol

Alcohol can increase the risk of dangerous side effects of medications.

- Increased risk of liver toxicity
  - Acetaminophen (generic Tylenol)
  - Cholesterol medications
- Increased risk of bleeding
  - Aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, Celebrex
  - Warfarin (generic Coumadin)
- Increased risk of nausea and vomiting
  - Theophylline
  - Metronidazole
- Increased risk of drowsiness
  - Antihistamines
  - Narcotic pain relievers
  - Anxiety medications
  - Sleeping pills
  - Antidepressants
  - Antipsychotics
- Increased risk of dangerously low blood pressure
  - Nitrates

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Tyramine

- Tyramine is an amino acid that can cause blood pressure to become dangerously high in combination with certain medications. Foods that are aged or contain large amounts of yeast are likely to have higher amounts of tyramine.
- Drugs that interact with tyramine
  - Selegiline
  - Phenelzine
  - Tranylcypromine
  - Linezolid
  - Isoniazid
- Tyramine containing foods
  - Aged cheeses
  - Aged, smoked, dried, or pickled meats
  - Beer and wine
  - Overripe or dried fruits
  - Fermented foods (soy sauce, kim chee, sauerkraut)
  - Beer and wine
  - Large amounts of chocolate

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Dairy

- Dairy foods, such as milk, yogurt, and cheese, are rich in calcium. Calcium can bind to certain antibiotics and prevent your body from absorbing them.
- These include antibiotics used to infections such as:
  - Ciprofloxacin
  - Levofloxacin
  - Tetracycline
  - Doxycycline

- Vitamin-mineral supplements can also interact with antibiotics.
- Calcium fortified foods, like orange juice, should also be avoided.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist about separating the dose of antibiotic from dairy or other sources of calcium.

Ask Your Pharmacist

- This is not a complete list of possible drug-food interactions.
- Remember to always talk to your pharmacist and doctor about the medications that you are taking to learn how they might interact with the foods and beverages that you consume.

References

- http://www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm096386.htm
- http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/GeneralUseofMedicine/UCM229033.pdf
- http://www.globalrph.com/drugfoodrxn.htm