

Urinary Tract Infections and Cranberry Products

Cranberry juice has been touted as a way to prevent urinary tract infections (UTIs). Scientists have studied the relationship for many years, and it appears that cranberry juice or capsules may decrease the number of UTIs over a year, especially for women who have UTIs frequently. However, the exact amount or form of cranberries (juice vs capsule) that is needed is not clear, and the conclusions apply to healthy women who do not use a catheter, not to other population groups.

Can drinking cranberry juice treat a UTI?

No. Research does not say that cranberry juice, capsules, or concentrate can help treat UTIs. If you have a UTI, see a doctor to get a prescription for an antibiotic and take the medicine as instructed.

Why do cranberry products help prevent UTIs?

Both cranberry juice and capsules seem to prevent infection by preventing bacteria from sticking to the walls of the bladder and other parts of the urinary tract. Cranberry juice provides additional fluids, which is possibly another reason it helps prevent recurrent UTIs.

My health food store sells cranberry capsules. Should I take those?

If you have frequent UTIs, it might help and probably will not hurt for you try taking cranberry capsules, especially if you do not drink cranberry juice. However, if you do not notice any difference in how often you get a UTI, it does not make sense to keep taking the capsules.

Is cranberry juice good for me?

Cranberry juice is a great source of fluid. It is also high in vitamin C. But beware—cranberry juice does have calories, around 120 calories for 1 cup. Drinking several glasses a day can provide extra calories that you do not need and might make you gain weight. Cranberry juice that is sweetened with low-calorie sweeteners has fewer calories. Look for the lower-calorie version at your grocery store, located next to the other cranberry juice.

What is cranberry concentrate?

Some medical food companies sell cranberry that is in a very concentrated liquid form. These products are for patients in hospitals and long-term care facilities who are prone to UTIs. Never take this type of cranberry product without the knowledge and consent of your doctor.

References

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