

# Pomegranate Could Fight Cancer

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Juice from the pomegranate shows promise for fighting prostate cancer. Credit: USDA Agricultural Research Service

Researchers in California are reporting new evidence explaining pomegranate juice's mysterious beneficial effects in fighting prostate cancer. In a study scheduled for the Sept. 19 issue of *ACS' Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, a bi-weekly publication, Navindra Seeram and colleagues have found that the tart, trendy beverage also uses a search-and-destroy strategy to target prostate cancer cells.

In previous research, Seeram's group found that pomegranate juice consumption had a beneficial effect for prostate cancer patients with rising prostate-specific antigen (PSA) levels. Such increases in PSA signal that the cancer is progressing, "doubling time" a key indicator of prognosis. Men whose PSA levels double in a short period are more likely to die from their cancer. Pomegranate juice increased doubling

times by almost fourfold.

In the new study, they researchers discovered evidence in laboratory experiments that pomegranate works in a “seek and destroy” fashion. On consumption, ellagitannins (ET), antioxidants abundant in pomegranate juice, break down to metabolites known as urolithins. The researchers showed that the urolithins concentrate at high levels in prostate tissue after being given orally and by injection to mice with prostate cancer. They also showed that urolithins inhibited the growth of human prostate cancer cells in cell culture.

“The chemopreventive potential of pomegranate ellagitannins and localization of their bioactive metabolites in mouse prostate tissue suggest that pomegranate may play a role in prostate cancer treatment and chemoprevention,” the researchers state, recommending further clinical studies with pomegranate and prostate cancer patients.

Source: ACS

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