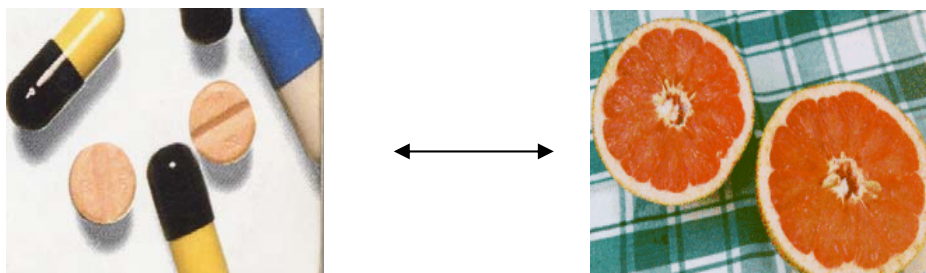


Improve the effectiveness of your medications by learning the effects of food and drinks

The effects of food on medicines

An effect of food on medicine can occur when the food you eat affects the ingredients in a medicine you are taking. Sometimes it prevents the medicine to work properly. However, not all the medications are affected by food, and some are affected only by certain food items, the time of eating and the way of cooking food. These effects can occur with prescription medicines, over the counter medicines, herbal products and dietary supplements e.g. vitamins, iron pills.



What if I have to avoid food / drinks I love

If your doctor advises you not to eat certain food while taking a medication, it is very important to avoid that food. You can discuss your concern with your doctor, pharmacist or dietitian.

There could be other options which would allow continuation of the medication and eating the food but you **MUST** ask your doctor about this. Such as:

- increasing time gap between eating that particular food and taking the medicine
- switching to another medicine that has similar effects but does not interact with food

For example, some of the cholesterol lowering drugs, known as statins can be affected by grapefruit juice. However, your doctor may be able to help you switch to other drugs.

How do I know if a certain food is safe to eat

- To be safe, you should carefully read the labels of all prescription and over-the-counter medicines
- Always ask your doctor or pharmacist about any known food-medicine effects and for alternatives

**Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW Inc. (CPSA)
Medicine Information and Peer Support (MIPS) Service**

Common food/ drink and their effects on medicines

Antibiotics & Antifungals	Food items / drinks	Effects
Erythromycins : E-Mycin, ERYC, Erythrocin	Acidic fruits or juices, carbonated beverages, wines, syrups, tomatoes, High fat meals	Acidic foods promote premature decomposition of erythromycin, which can interfere with antibiotic effectiveness. High fat meals severely restrict drug absorption

Blood Pressure and Heart Medications	Food items / drinks	Effects
Anticoagulants: Anthrrombin-K, Carfin, Coumadin, Heparin, Sofarin, Warfarin	Foods rich in vitamin K– include asparagus, bacon beef liver, cabbage, fish, green leafy vegetables eg. lettuce and broccoli	A larger intake than usual of foods rich in vitamin K may reduce effectiveness and require larger doses of drug
Beta Blockers: Ioperssor, Inderal, Trandate, Tenormin	Alcohol	Alcohol may exaggerate drug's ability to lower blood pressure and may increase its mild sedative effect

Antianxiety and Antidepressant Medicines	Food items / drinks	Effects
Monamine Oxidase Inhibitors: Nardil, Parnate	Foods high in tyramine: cheese, yeast or meat extract smoked or pickled meat, large amount of caffeine - containing food or beverages, red wine	Very dangerous reactions can occur when drug is combined with these foods or beverages. If in doubt, check with your doctor.

Things we should remember -----

- Read directions, warnings and food effects precautions printed on all medicine labels and package inserts
- Never mix the medicine with any food / drinks (unless directed by the doctor)
- Must not put medication into hot drinks / alcoholic drinks

Acknowledgement: American Pharamceutical Assoc., Food and Drug Interaction Guide, Diet and Drug interactions, University of Maryland Medicine. Compilation by: Nazmul Ahasan (M.Sc in Biochemistry), MIPS Project Officer