



Making Treatment Decisions

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Mangosteen Juice

Other common name(s): xango, mangostan, queen of fruits

Scientific/medical name(s): *Garcinia mangostana*

Description

Mangosteen is a tropical fruit native to Southeast Asia, which is touted for its antioxidants, especially xanthones (a type of chemical in certain plants.) Its fruit, including the rind and pulp, can be pureed together and sold as a drink. Its rind may be dried and powdered, and substances are also extracted from its bark. Despite the name, this tree is not related to the mango.

Overview

Although there is no evidence that mangosteen juice, puree, or bark is effective as a treatment for cancer, its fruit has been shown to be rich in antioxidants. Very early studies in the lab suggest that it may have promise as a treatment to be applied to the skin for acne. Early small studies in the lab and on rats suggest that further research should be done to find out if it can help with cancer prevention in humans.

How is it promoted for use?

In the United States, it is taken by mouth supposedly to support microbiological balance, help the immune system, improve joint flexibility, and provide mental support. Some proponents claim that it can help diarrhea, infections, tuberculosis, and a host of other illnesses. In countries where the tree grows, various parts of the plant are used by native healers.

What does it involve?

The juice or puree is eaten or drunk. In Asia and the Philippines, the rind may be steeped in water to make tea. Some folk healers prepare an ointment or salve to apply to the skin for conditions such as eczema, injuries, and infections. Others boil the leaves and bark of the tree to make a medicinal drink or to mix with other herbs to apply to wounds. The roots may be boiled to make a drink for women with menstrual problems.

What is the history behind it?

Parts of the mangosteen tree, including the fruit and bark, have been used in folk medicine in Asian countries for many years. Mangostin was identified as a xanthone in mangosteen in the mid-1800s and found to have anti-inflammatory effects in rats in the late 1970s. Today, mangosteen is sold in the United States mainly through a network marketing system. Independent distributors, rather than stores, buy and sell mangosteen juice.

What is the evidence?

Like many other plants, extracts of mangosteen have shown in lab tests that they can stop certain bacteria and fungi from growing. One lab study suggested that mangosteen extract inhibits the growth of acne-causing bacteria. It has not been tested on people to find out if it helps acne in humans. In a lab dish, it also showed activity that slowed the growth of certain cancer cells. A small study on cancer inhibition in rats suggested that the rind of the mangosteen may reduce the risk of cancer cell growth in the bowel. However, mangosteen's cancer inhibitory effect has not been tested in humans.

Are there any possible problems or complications?

No ill effects have been reported to date. Relying on this type of treatment alone, and avoiding conventional medical care, may have serious health consequences.

Additional Resources

More Information from Your American Cancer Society

The following information on complementary and alternative therapies may also be helpful to you. These materials may be ordered from our toll-free number (1-800-ACS-2345).

- [Guidelines for Using Complementary and Alternative Methods](#)

- [How to Know What Is Safe: Choosing and Using Dietary Supplements](#)
- [American Cancer Society Operational Statement on Complementary and Alternative Methods of Cancer Management](#)

References

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Note: This information may not cover all possible claims, uses, actions, precautions, side effects or interactions. It is not intended as medical advice, and should not be relied upon as a substitute for consultation with your doctor, who is familiar with your medical situation.