

# NIH Clinical Center Patient Education Materials

## Important Drug and Food Information

From the NIH Clinical Center Drug-Nutrient Interaction Task Force

**This document discusses important information to know when you are taking any of the following drugs:**

Amiodarone (Cordarone®), Pacerone®)	Nifedipine (Procardia®, Aldalat®)
Buspirone (Buspar®)	Simvastatin (Zocor®)
Carbamazepine (Tegretol®)	Sirolimus (Rapamune®)
Cyclosporine (Gengraf®, Neoral®)	Tacrolimus (Prograf®)
Lovastatin (Mevacor®)	

Eating and drinking some citrus fruits and juices and other ingredients can interact with drugs, such as the ones listed above. Intravenous (IV) versions of these drugs do not interact with food.

**When taking any of these drugs by mouth, avoid eating and drinking:**

- Grapefruit juice
- Fresh, canned, or frozen grapefruit
- Tangelos and pomelos
- Products that contain grapefruit, bitter orange, or Seville orange

Check labels of juices, juice blends, fruit drinks, marinades, marmalades, and sodas for these ingredients.

### **What is a drug-nutrient interaction?**

A drug-nutrient interaction can occur when the food you eat affects how your medicine works. The effect of the medicine may be changed, or there may be serious side effects.

The fruits and ingredients listed above contain chemical compounds that can affect how some medicines are absorbed from the gastrointestinal tract. The absorption of some drugs can be increased or decreased so that the amount of drug in your body is not right.

### **Do other citrus fruits cause the same problem?**

Other citrus fruits, such as lemons, tangerines, and sweet oranges (Blood, Clementine, Mandarin, and Naval) do not cause a problem when taken with these drugs.

### **What will happen if I accidentally eat grapefruit or any other ingredient listed above?**

It is unlikely that accidentally eating or drinking a small amount of these products one time will cause serious problems. These ingredients can affect drug absorption for several days, however. Consult your doctor or pharmacist if you think that you are experiencing side effects.

## **What if I have always taken my medication with grapefruit?**

It is recommended that you stop eating grapefruit. Tell your pharmacist and doctor that you have made this change.

## **What is the possibility that grapefruit and/or these other ingredients affect other drugs that I take?**

While studies are still ongoing, it has been found that these ingredients may change the absorption of several prescription and over-the-counter drugs. Check with your pharmacist about other medications and/or any supplements that you are taking. There may be a drug-nutrient interaction.

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