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WPMT

Good news about grapefruit and breast cancer

Dr. Tim Harlan, aka Dr. Gourmet, explains the results of a recent study about grapefruit consumption and breast cancer risk.

Dr. Tim Harlan aka Dr. Gourmet

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There have been reports in the medical journals that seemed to link intake of more than 1/4 of a grapefruit each day to an increased incidence of breast cancer. A lot of women I know — patients and colleagues among them — quit eating grapefruit completely. However, I have good news. A study was published in the British Journal of Cancer with completely different (and welcome) conclusions.

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Scientists made use of information gathered during the Nurses' Health Study, which is a large-scale, long-term study following women who were between the ages of 30 and 55 when the study began in 1976. This was a much larger study than the previously reported research concerning grapefruit. Starting in the mid 1980's, the participating women filled out food frequency questionnaires every four years. Those questionnaires asked, among other things, about their consumption of grapefruit.

The researchers analyzed the diets of those women in the study who were diagnosed with breast cancer, and found no association between grapefruit intake and incidence of breast cancer, regardless of their Body Mass Index, or other variables.

On the contrary, when they split those women with breast cancer between those women who were on hormone replacement therapy and those who were not, they found that eating more grapefruit (1/4 grapefruit or more per day, on average) was related to a reduced risk of breast cancer in those women who had never been on hormone replacement therapy.

The scientists further note in their article that for those women whose cancers were estrogen and progesterone negative, an increased consumption of grapefruit (the fruit, not the juice) was related to a reduced risk of breast cancer.

If you've been avoiding grapefruit because of information you've heard, good news! You can safely go back to eating grapefruit.

Eat well, eat healthy, enjoy life!

Dr. Gourmet

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