

Pomegranate juice: Beyond antioxidants, potential benefits for dialysis patients

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Studies in recent years have claimed multiple health benefits of pomegranate juice, including that it is a good source of antioxidants and lowers both cholesterol and blood pressure, especially in diabetic and hypertensive patients. A preliminary study now suggests that it can ward off a number of complications in kidney disease patients on dialysis, including the high morbidity rate due to infections and cardiovascular events, according to a paper being presented at the American Society of Nephrology's 43rd Annual Meeting and Scientific Exposition in Denver, CO.

Batya Kristal, MD, FASN (Western Galilee Hospital, in Nahariya, Ruth & Bruce Rappaport Faculty of Medicine, Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel), PhD candidate, Lilach Shema, and colleagues studied 101 [dialysis](#) patients who received either pomegranate juice or another placebo drink at the beginning of each dialysis session, three times a week for one year.

Laboratory tests showed that patients who drank pomegranate juice experienced reduced inflammation and the damage of oxidative stress caused by free radicals, was minimized. Furthermore, pomegranate juice drinkers were less likely to be hospitalized due to infections. These findings support other studies that suggest pomegranate juice has potent antioxidant properties.

Recent analyses of data not included in this abstract, revealed that those who drank pomegranate juice also showed an improvement in

cardiovascular risk factors, such as reduced [blood pressure](#), improvement in lipid profile and fewer cardiovascular events, suggesting that they had better heart health. These results are in agreement with other studied populations and particularly important for hemodialysis patients, because most [kidney disease](#) patients die either from cardiovascular-related causes or infections.

The authors say their findings suggest that drinking a controlled amount of pomegranate juice with a safe and monitored content of potassium may help reduce the complications that often occur in dialysis patients. It is important to consider the risk involved in potassium overload, especially in chronic kidney disease (CKD) patients with dietary potassium restriction.

"Considering the expected epidemic of CKD in the next decade, further clinical trials using [pomegranate juice](#) aimed at reducing the high cardiovascular morbidity of CKD patients and their deterioration to end-stage renal disease should be conducted," said Dr. Kristal.

Provided by American Society of Nephrology

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