

Tart cherry shown to decrease joint pain, sore muscles in some breast cancer patients

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Tart cherry reduces the musculoskeletal effects of aromatase inhibitors in patients with non-metastatic breast cancer, according to new findings from a clinical trial by researchers at Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine and Edwards Comprehensive Cancer

Center.

Aromatase inhibitors (AIs) are a standard treatment for hormone receptor-positive breast cancer in postmenopausal women. These agents can help prevent recurrence of the disease by inhibiting the action of aromatase, an enzyme responsible for conversion of androgens to estrogens. About half of patients who take AIs also suffer from joint and [muscle pain](#) known as [aromatase inhibitor](#) induced arthralgia, which, at times, can be debilitating and cause patients to not complete their treatments.

This randomized, double-blind trial compared the consumption of 1 ounce of tart cherry concentrate in 8 ounces of water daily for six weeks with a placebo group in women with stage 1, 2 or 3 non-[metastatic breast cancer](#). A total of 60 patients were enrolled throughout the course of the clinical trial, conducted May 2016 to August 2018.

Patients documented their pain intensity at the start of the trial, weekly and at study completion. Patients who completed the trial recorded a 34.7% mean decrease in pain compared to 1.4% in the placebo group.

"The flavonoids and anthocyanins in tart cherry have anti-inflammatory properties and may be playing a role in reducing the side effects of joint pain and muscles aches, although etiology of aromatase-induced arthralgias remain unclear at this time," said principal investigator Maria Tria Tirona, M.D., professor of hematology-oncology at the Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine and director of medical oncology at Edwards Comprehensive Cancer Center. "There was a statistically significant difference in the pain levels experienced by patients in the group that received the [tart cherry](#) concentrate compared to the placebo group."

Provided by Marshall University

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