

Pomegranate's preventing features of many health conditions of postmenopausal wom...

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In this essay I will discuss the word power of pomegranate to prevent many health conditions as well as extend life span in postmenopausal women.

Women are indeed complex creatures, at least from a biological perspective mainly attributed their endocrine system that is made up of hormones (chemical messengers), glands that produce and secrete these hormones throughout the bloodstream to perform their specific tasks.

These tasks are involved in all of a woman's vital functions, not just reproductive, but cardiovascular, neurological, digestive, musculoskeletal and immune function.

However many factors attributed to modern day living conspire against the fine balance of this hormone system required for optimum health, since hormones are very susceptible to many negative stimuli including:

- Stressors both psychological and physical.
- Poor diet and nutrition.
- Environmental pollutants.
- Hormone disrupting chemicals from household cleaners, cosmetics, personal care products, processed food additives.

It's striking that the seeds or arils of pomegranate closely resemble the female eggs, but of even more significance is the fact that the seeds contain the same oestrogen hormones contained in the female ovary; namely oestradiol, oestrone and oestriol or as our American friends would call them, estradiol, estrone and estriol.

In terms of menopausal women, this could mean relief from many symptoms or avoidance of many conditions including depression and mood swings, reduced risk of osteoporosis, breast cancer and heart disease.

Reversal of bone loss

A study in 2004 examined rats who had their ovaries removed, where researchers observed an increased rate of bone loss in the rats, which is symptomatic of women in menopause. After supplementing the rats diet the combination of pomegranate and juice for a couple of weeks, the observed a marked reduction in the rate of bone mineral loss similar to normal rates.

Improvement in mood

In the same 2004 study cited above, Japanese researchers also found that rats when administered pomegranate extract demonstrated reduced levels of depression symptoms, leading to the conclusion that pomegranate could be effective in a clinical sense for reducing symptoms of depression in women.

Protection against heart disease

Menopausal women experience an increased risk (2 to 3 times) of death from heart disease compared to women of similar age who were not menopausal. 2 Once again pomegranates proved their worth with heart protective benefits:

- Reduction of cholesterol - a study carried out in 2000 observed a reduction in oxidized cholesterol (Ox-LDL) among subjects that were given pomegranate juice.
- Reduction in blood pressure - Israeli researchers any 2004 study gave subjects one glass of pomegranate juice per day and after three months noted marked reductions in blood pressure, oxidized cholesterol (Ox-LDL) and reduced plaque in the carotid arteries (arteries supplying blood and nutrients to the brain) by an impressive 29%. 3
- Reduction of platelet aggregation - One study demonstrated that pomegranate juice slowed down platelet aggregation (blood clotting), thus thinning the blood and hence preventing clot induced heart attacks.
- Improvement in heart health - A few studies have observed that not only is heart health improved subjects with existing heart disease, but also in subjects with no diagnosed heart disease; this is due to the multi-action ability of pomegranate that reduces arterial plaque, improves nitric oxide levels (that help dilate the blood vessels in the heart) and prevent plaque buildup.
- Better oxygen levels - According to a 2007 study, drinking 227ml of pomegranate juice every day over a three-month period improved oxygen for levels to the heart in patients with existing heart disease.

Breast cancer prevention

Studies have demonstrated pomegranate's ability to protect against breast tumours via the rich spectrum of antioxidants and anthocyanidins that pomegranate possesses. 5

From our previous blog, " Pomegranate and breast cancer", we mentioned the wisdom of the natural oestrogen regulating effects of pomegranate, but it is worth reiterating that some women may be concerned about pomegranate (and other oestrogenic foods for that matter) may dangerously increase oestrogen levels; well have no fear because nature is at the rescue once again. Pomegranate is one of nature's adaptogen's that possess an intelligence that only medical drugs dream of.

Pomegranate has the innate intelligence or wisdom to change its role depending on the needs of the body; in this case when oestrogen levels are low, pomegranate will increase those levels, and conversely when oestrogen levels are high the mild oestrogens (take up oestrogen receptor sites, thus lowering the uptake of strong oestrogens.

If ever there was an example of the intelligence of plants and their extracts, then look no further than adaptogens such as pomegranate, which fits the billing as " A woman's elixir".

Furthermore researchers demonstrated the effectiveness of pomegranate against Tamoxifen and oestradiol in a 2011 study, concluding that pomegranate extract could potentially prevent the development of oestrogen type breast cancers without the risk of uterine cancer that is

associated with Tamoxifen use. Moreover there is a risk of secondary cancer with Tamoxifen treatment that is more resistant and more difficult to treat.

Finally pomegranates can help women from all age groups with their wide spectrum of disease preventing and health promoting attributes including:

- Enhanced fertility
- Balancing menstrual cycles
- Correcting PMS,
- Alleviating hot flushes and night sweats
- Other hormonal disruptions
- Reduction in chronic inflammation that is linked to many conditions e. g. endometriosis, fibroids, POS, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, cancers, autoimmune diseases, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, skin ageing. Also reducing chronic inflammation will reduce free radical production.