Grapefruit-Inulin Combo Improve Digestive Health

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As a food that is rich in antioxidants called polyphenols, grapefruit has been found to help play a role in weight loss.\(^1\) It has also received attention for its role in digestive health because of the ability of polyphenols to escape absorption in the small intestine and reach the large intestine, where they influence healthy bacterial growth.\(^2\)

Now a new study\(^3\) has found that combining grapefruit extract with inulin, a sugar found in plants, functions similarly to fiber and serves as “food” for bacteria,\(^4\) which can help improve digestive health.

In the study, eight rats weighing 120 to 128 grams were given diets that contained 0.3% of grapefruit extract, either 6 or 12 grams of inulin, a combination of both, or placebo for 28 days. Researchers assessed the effects of the supplementation on a number of health measures of the large intestine, including bulk, pH, microbial enzymes activity, and short-chain fatty acid production.

At the end of the study, they found that the lowest food intake and lowest body weight were seen in the Polyphenol/10% Inulin group. Compared to the control group, there was an improvement in all health measurements of the large intestine, including greater intestinal bulk, lower pH and ammonia levels, and significantly higher microbial activity and short-chain fatty acids.

For the researchers, “our results suggested that the simultaneous intake of inulin and polyphenols...may be valuable because flavonoids may prevent various diseases associated with the Western-type diet and should be an integral ingredient of a common diet.”

Greg Arnold is a Chiropractic Physician practicing in Danville, CA. You can contact Dr. Arnold directly by emailing him at mailto:PitchingDoc@msn.com or visiting his website www.PitchingDoc.com.

Reference:
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\(^2\) F. Saura-Calixto, Degradation of polyphenols (catechin and tannic acid) in the rat intestinal tract Effect on colonic fermentation and faecal output, Br J Nutr 71 (1994), pp. 933–946

\(^3\) Zdunczyk Z. Cecal parameters of rats fed diets containing grapefruit polyphenols and inulin as single supplements or in a combination. Nutrition 2006, In Press


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