



Grapefruit Seed Extract (GFSE)

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Many times I write articles extolling the virtues of a natural herb or supplement. However, this article is **much different** as a recent article has brought to light the “dark side” of the supplement business and the problems involved with such a loosely regulated industry. My first clarification is making sure everyone recognizes the difference between two oft-confused herbal supplements, grapefruit seed extract (GFSE) and grape seed extract (GSE). GFSE has been “traditionally” used as an antimicrobial and GSE as part of the complex family of oligomeric proanthocyanidins (OPCs) which also include resveratrol and maritime pine bark extract among others. This article solely discusses GFSE.

I am placing the reference in the heart of the article as it deserves primacy. “The Adulteration of Commercial Grapefruit Seed Extract With Synthetic Antimicrobial and Disinfectant Compounds” by John H Cardelina II, PhD, HerbalGram (official Journal of the American Botanical Council), Issue 94, May-July 2012, 62-66. This remarkable review exposes the GFSE scam that has been foisted upon the world market. Interestingly, most commercial preparations of GFSE do have antimicrobial activity (can fight bacteria and yeast). However, the “proprietary process” of the leading distributors of GFSE is actually contaminating the natural compound with synthetic antibiotic or disinfectant compounds!

For further clarification, what this means is that true *natural* GFSE has absolutely no antimicrobial activity, and when you purchase this product you are actually ingesting a synthetic antibiotic or disinfectant which can act as an irritant to any tissue it touches! In addition, the toxic chemical additives can interact with medicines, altering drug levels.

Yes, I too have made the mistake of recommending GFSE to my patients mainly in the treatment of gastrointestinal infections. I was wrong, misled by promising data indicating a broad-spectrum anti-infective “natural” product. All I can do now is make sure all of my patients stop taking anything with GFSE in it. I will return or throw away any product in our store with GFSE, and I encourage you to make sure that all the stores you frequent remove these products as well. The natural health world is truly a “buyers beware” industry which is why you need guidance and consultation from your knowledgeable healthcare practitioner. As ever, I will continue to research and keep current with the supplement industry, keeping you abreast of any findings that come across my desk.

Your Journey to Health & Healing
Gary E Foresman, MD

References:
Upon Request

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