

# The Health Effects of Eating Soursop Fruit and Tea

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## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Soursop, also known as graviola or guanabana, has been used for centuries in traditional medicine to treat conditions ranging from arthritis and infections to digestive issues and fevers
- › Research shows that compounds in soursop disrupt cancer cell growth, balance blood sugar, reduce inflammation, and support immune function
- › Drinking soursop tea provides calming effects, supports digestion, boosts skin health, and delivers antioxidants that protect your body from oxidative stress
- › Overconsumption of soursop, especially daily use in large amounts, raises your risk of neurological problems, so moderation is key for safety
- › The safest way to benefit from soursop is to enjoy the fresh fruit or tea a few times per week, always removing the seeds, and combining it with other healthy lifestyle habits for maximum effect

For centuries, soursop has been used across South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia as a natural remedy for everything from infections to arthritis. Known also as graviola or guanabana, this tropical fruit carries a reputation that goes far beyond its sweet-and-sour taste. People brewed its leaves into teas for pain relief, used its seeds against parasites, and relied on the fruit pulp to ease digestive troubles.

What was once folk knowledge is now being backed by scientific research showing that compounds in soursop have measurable effects on the body. Researchers are finding that it contains bioactive compounds with wide-ranging effects, from influencing cancer cells to regulating blood pressure. At the same time, nutrition data points to its fiber and vitamin C content as direct supports for your immune system, digestion, and long-term health.

Beyond the fruit itself, interest has expanded to soursop tea and supplements, making it easier for people to include it in daily routines. Understanding how these choices fit into your own health goals begins with looking closely at the science behind its most researched benefits.

## **Research Confirms Soursop's Broad Range of Healing Actions**

In a study published in *Molecules*, scientists analyzed 49 studies conducted between 1981 and 2021 to better understand the pharmacological activities of soursop (*Annona muricata*).<sup>1</sup> The goal was to identify its main compounds and determine how these natural chemicals work in the body. Findings highlighted anticancer effects in 25% of studies, antiulcer in 17%, and antidiabetic in 14%. Other areas included antibacterial, antiviral, antidiarrheal, antihypertensive, antiprotozoal, and wound-healing properties.

- **Different parts of the plant target different problems** — The researchers noted that every part of soursop — the fruit, leaves, seeds, bark, and roots — offered unique benefits.

For example, the fruit was linked to arthritis relief and digestive support, the seeds were used for parasite infections, and the leaves showed activity against headaches, cystitis, and even cancer. By pointing out these differences, the review made it clear that soursop is not just a fruit but an entire healing toolkit.

- **Soursop affects cancer through multiple mechanisms** — Extracts from various plant parts interrupted cancer growth in several ways. They:

- Blocked enzymes that tumors rely on to spread through tissues.
  - Triggered programmed cell death (apoptosis) in lung, breast, prostate, colon, and endometrial cancer cells.
  - Disrupted energy production inside cancer cells by damaging their **mitochondria**, which are like the "power plants" of the cell.
  - Activated molecular switches that force cancer cells to self-destruct.
- **Protective effects extend to the stomach and blood sugar regulation** – Beyond anticancer properties, extracts also shielded the stomach lining from damage. The leaves reduced ulcers by boosting prostaglandin production, which strengthens your stomach's natural defenses.

In diabetes models, soursop decreased oxidative stress in the pancreas and lowered blood sugar by blocking enzymes that break down carbohydrates into glucose. This means steadier energy levels and less strain on insulin production.

- **The plant's chemistry explains these benefits** – Researchers identified acetogenins, alkaloids, flavonoids, and vitamins as the main drivers of activity. Acetogenins blocked adenosine triphosphate (ATP) – your body's energy currency – production in cancer cells, starving them of energy.
- Flavonoids** neutralized free radicals, reducing inflammation and damage to tissues like the stomach lining. Alkaloids disrupted bacterial membranes, making them effective against infections. Together, these compounds created a layered system of protection across multiple organ systems.
- **Safety depends on dose and exposure** – While the paper highlighted many benefits, it also raised concerns about toxicity at very high doses. Certain compounds in soursop disrupted energy production in nerve cells, which is why daily, heavy intake of soursop fruit or extracts was discouraged. The review suggested moderate, mindful use to avoid neurological risks.

## Daily Use of Soursop Juice Shows Clear Health Benefits

An in-depth report from Health reviewed the nutritional profile and health applications of soursop.<sup>2</sup> The piece focused on its vitamin, mineral, and antioxidant content while also exploring how people have used it traditionally and in modern settings.

- **Human trials show direct improvements** – One of the most compelling findings discussed was a study involving 143 people with borderline high blood pressure.<sup>3</sup> Those who drank 7 ounces of soursop juice daily for three months experienced significantly lower blood pressure compared with the control group.
- **The fruit's rich vitamin C content reduces inflammation** – A single cup delivers about 46.4 milligrams (mg) of **vitamin C**.<sup>4</sup> Diets high in vitamin C are known to calm inflammation, and that matters if you struggle with conditions like arthritis or inflammatory bowel disease. If you're managing chronic joint pain or digestive flare-ups, adding soursop could mean less daily discomfort and more energy to move and live actively.
- **Antioxidants protect against cellular damage** – Compounds in soursop neutralize free radicals, the unstable molecules that damage your DNA and accelerate aging. By lowering oxidative stress, these compounds help protect your skin, heart, and even brain. In practical terms, this translates to slower aging, stronger defenses against disease, and improved resilience under stress.
- **Fiber supports digestion and lowers disease risk** – Soursop provides 7.42 grams of fiber in just one cup.<sup>5</sup> Fiber helps regulate bowel movements, prevent constipation, and support healthy gut bacteria. Researchers also linked higher **fiber intake** with lower risks of cancer. For someone wanting better digestion and long-term cancer protection, soursop provides a simple, food-based option.

## Soursop Tea Delivers Unique Everyday Health Support

An article from LifeMD explored how soursop leaves, when brewed into tea, provide a concentrated source of antioxidants, vitamins, and plant compounds.<sup>6</sup> Unlike the fruit, which is seasonal and requires preparation, tea offers a simple way to include soursop in your daily wellness routine. The piece highlighted its role in immune defense, digestion, mood support, and cardiovascular health.

- **The drink supports emotional and mental balance** – Soursop tea contains **magnesium** and tryptophan, nutrients linked to relaxation and improved mood. People drink it for its calming effects and to ease mild anxiety or sleep problems. For someone struggling with restless nights or stress-driven fatigue, replacing a nightly beverage with soursop tea could make sleep easier and mornings less draining.
- **Skin health benefits were emphasized** – The antioxidants in soursop tea, including compounds like quercetin and tannins, protect skin cells from oxidative damage, which accelerates wrinkles and dullness. The tea's antimicrobial effects also help with acne and other minor skin issues. In practical terms, drinking soursop tea gives your skin an internal shield against aging and irritation.
- **The tea shows protective effects for your liver** – Antioxidant compounds in soursop help shield your liver from toxins, alcohol damage, and chemical stress. This matters for anyone exposed to environmental pollutants, ultraprocessed foods, or medications that strain your liver. Stronger liver function means better detoxification, more stable energy, and greater resilience overall.
- **Your cardiovascular system and immune defense gain measurable support** – **Potassium** and magnesium in the tea work together to regulate blood pressure and circulation. The antioxidants reduce inflammation in blood vessels, which lowers the risk of arterial damage over time. If you're watching your blood pressure numbers, this makes soursop tea a small but meaningful habit to protect your heart.

Soursop tea's high vitamin C levels stimulate the production of white blood cells, which fight infection. Combined with its antibacterial and antifungal compounds, this makes the tea useful for warding off colds or minor seasonal illnesses. Instead of waiting until sickness strikes, daily tea drinking acts as a proactive shield.

- **Risks and cautions to be aware of** – Soursop tea should not be overused and may not be safe for certain groups. People with low blood pressure, pregnant women, and those on medications for blood sugar or kidney conditions are advised to avoid it. Side effects like nausea or stomach upset may occur when consumed in large amounts, reinforcing the importance of moderation.

## **Practical Steps to Use Soursop Safely and Effectively**

Soursop is powerful, but like anything with strong plant compounds, it works best when you use it wisely. My goal here is to help you make the most of its benefits without running into the risks tied to overuse. Whether you're curious about the fruit, tea, or extracts, these steps give you a safe way to explore soursop while protecting your long-term health.

- 1. Start with moderation and variety** – If you're looking to improve your health naturally, begin with small servings of fresh soursop fruit or tea a few times per week rather than daily. This gives your body the antioxidants, fiber, and bioactive compounds without overloading it with the soursop compounds that, at high doses, harm your nervous system. Balance soursop with other nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables to avoid relying on it alone.
- 2. Choose the right form for your needs** – For digestion or immune support, tea made from soursop leaves is a convenient option. If your goal is higher fiber intake or improving blood sugar control, then fresh fruit is better. Powder and extracts exist, but stick with food forms first so you can adjust more easily if you notice effects. Think of the fresh fruit as nourishment and the tea as gentle daily support.

- 3. Protect your liver and brain by avoiding excess** – Consuming large amounts of soursop long-term increases your risk of neurological problems. So, enjoy it as part of your diet, but don't overdo it if you're taking extracts or powders. This approach allows you to gain the benefits while steering clear of the risks.
- 4. Pair soursop with healthy lifestyle habits** – Soursop works best when it's combined with the basics: regular movement, sunlight exposure, and cutting **vegetable oils** from your diet. Soursop's antioxidants and minerals, like potassium, support your blood pressure, but they'll do more for you if your overall lifestyle also promotes circulation and **cellular energy**.
- 5. Use preparation methods that keep it safe** – If you are preparing the fruit at home, always remove the seeds because they are toxic.<sup>7</sup> Wash the skin well, scoop out the pulp, and eat it fresh or blended into a smoothie. For tea, simmer fresh or dried leaves for 10 to 15 minutes and enjoy it in moderation. By preparing it correctly, you ensure that you get the healing properties without any unnecessary risks.

## **FAQs About Soursop**

**Q: What is soursop and why is it used in natural medicine?**

**A:** Soursop, also called graviola or guanabana, is a tropical fruit traditionally used in places like South America, the Caribbean, and Africa to treat a wide range of conditions. Different parts of the plant are used for different purposes – the leaves for calming and blood pressure, the seeds for parasite control, and the fruit for digestion, arthritis, and fever. Modern research highlights its antioxidants, fiber, and plant compounds that support immunity, blood sugar balance, and overall health.

**Q: How does soursop help with serious conditions like cancer or diabetes?**

**A:** Research found that soursop contains compounds that disrupt the growth of cancer cells by triggering apoptosis, which is programmed cell death.<sup>8</sup> Other studies show its extracts block enzymes involved in carbohydrate breakdown, helping regulate blood sugar and supporting people with diabetes.<sup>9</sup> These findings suggest it acts on a cellular level, targeting harmful processes directly.

**Q: Is drinking soursop tea different from eating the fruit?**

**A:** Yes, tea made from the leaves is often used for relaxation, immune support, and digestion, while the fresh fruit is richer in fiber and helps regulate bowel movements and blood sugar. Soursop tea is especially calming, helping with sleep, mood, and skin health. Both forms work, but the best choice depends on whether you want daily gentle support or a fiber-rich fruit serving.

**Q: Are there risks with eating too much soursop?**

**A:** There are. Overconsumption of soursop could damage brain cells and raise the risk of conditions similar to Parkinson's disease.<sup>10</sup> Long-term daily use, especially of large amounts or extracts, is not safe. Seeds are also toxic and should always be removed. The key is moderation – occasional use offers benefits, but constant heavy use increases risks.

**Q: What is the safest way to include soursop in my diet?**

**A:** The safest approach is moderation and balance. Enjoy fresh soursop fruit or tea a few times a week, always removing the seeds before eating. Stick with one or two cups of tea a day rather than drinking it constantly. Pair it with lifestyle basics like

good sleep, sun exposure, and movement to amplify its benefits. This way, you support your digestion, immunity, and circulation without exposing your nervous system to long-term harm.

## Sources and References

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- <sup>1, 8</sup> [Molecules](#). 2022 Feb 10;27(4):1201
- <sup>2, 9</sup> [Health](#) March 19, 2025
- <sup>3</sup> [Journal of Human Hypertension](#), 2020, 34, Pages 223–232
- <sup>4, 5</sup> [U.S. Department of Agriculture, FoodData Central, Soursop](#), raw
- <sup>6</sup> [LifeMD](#) February 26, 2025
- <sup>7</sup> [Cleveland Clinic](#) December 17, 2021
- <sup>10</sup> [Health HQ](#) June 2024