

# Ask the Pharmacist

The pharmacist is the best source of information to help you get the most out of your medicine. Here to answer your questions on medicine is KM Sia, a pharmacist with 7 years of experience. He is currently managing an independent pharmacy in Sepang.

## WHAT ARE DIURETICS?

**Q: Can you please explain what diuretics are and what do they do?**

**A:** Diuretics are medicines that help to remove excess water from the body, through the urine. They act on the kidneys, which control the amount of water circulating in the body.

There are three main types of diuretics

- **Thiazides**, which cause moderate increases in water excretion, and are suitable for long-term use
- **Loop diuretic**, which are fast acting and usually used during emergencies
- **Potassium-sparing diuretics**, which are milder and are often prescribed with the other two types of diuretics

Diuretics may be used as part of treatment for conditions that cause swelling from water retention, such as:

- edema
- high blood pressure
- heart failure
- liver disease
- kidney disease
- glaucoma



## GRAPEFRUIT AND DRUG INTERACTIONS

**Q: I hear that eating grapefruit and drinking grapefruit juice will affect the medication that I am taking. Why is it so?**

**A:** The chemicals in grapefruit interfere with enzymes that breakdown certain drugs in your digestive system, causing more of these drugs to enter the bloodstream. An increase in the amount of these drugs in the bloodstream will increase the effect of the drugs. This puts you at an increased risk of serious side effects.

There are many medications that are known to be affected by grapefruit juice. It is advisable to consult your doctor or pharmacist to find out if you should avoid grapefruit juice while you are taking the medication.

You may also want to avoid other dietary supplements that contain grapefruit bioflavonoids.