

Cancer: Precautions for Use of Dietary/ Herbal Supplements

Tell your health care team if you use any herbs, supplements, vitamins, minerals or other remedies. Bring all of these with you to each doctor's appointment.

Many dietary/herbal supplements and other natural medicines or products may be dangerous if used during your cancer treatment. It is important to know that if a supplement or product is labeled as “natural,” it does not mean it is safe or does not have harmful side effects. These supplements and products may interact with other medicines you take and can cause health problems such as bleeding, changes in your blood pressure or organ damage.

Limited information is available about some dietary/herbal supplements and natural medicines or products. Many of these products have not been tested in clinical studies in humans and the effects they may cause are unknown.

For these reasons, we recommend that you do not take dietary/herbal supplements or other natural products during your cancer treatment. A supplement (pill or powder form) may cause problems with your cancer treatment, make your treatment less effect or increase your side effects. Foods with these substances are normally not harmful, if taken in limited amounts as part of your regular diet. If you want to use dietary/herbal supplements or products, it is very important to talk with your doctor or pharmacist before you take any of these products.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

The following supplements or products may **increase your risk of bleeding**:

Aloe	Evodia	Marijuana
Astragalus	Fennel	Melatonin
Berberine	Feverfew	Pomegranate
Bishop's Weed	Fish oil: more than 3g/day	Pseudoginseng (Panax)
Black Pepper	Garlic	Quercetin
Black tea	Ginger	Red clover
Blue-green Algae	Ginkgo	Reishi mushrooms
Burdock Root	Ginseng	Schisandra
Cat's Claw	Glucosamine	Selenium
Chamomile	Goldenseal	Tahitian noni
Coleus	Green tea	Tiratricol
CoQ10	Guggul	Tree Turmeric
Danshen	Higenamine	Turmeric (curcumin)
DHEA	Hu zhang	White pepper
Essiac (sheep sorrel)	Mangosteen	Wolfberry (Goji Juice)

The following supplements or products may have **antioxidant effects and cause problems with your cancer treatment**:

Acai	Beta-glucans	CoQ10
Aloe	Black mulberry	Red raspberry leaf
Alpha-lipoic acid	Black pepper	Theanine
Ashwagandha	Blue-green algae	Vitamin C, more than 2000 mg/day
Berberine	Burdock root	
Beta-carotene	Cat's Claw	

The following supplements or products may cause **hormone problems or problems with your hormone medicine**:

Chamomile	Ginseng	Red raspberry leaf
DHEA	Milk thistle	Resveratrol
Essiac (sheep sorrel)	Pseudoginseng (Panax)	Sage
Fennel	Red clover	

The following supplements or products may cause **problems with your liver or how well your liver works:**

Ackee	European barberry	Noni
African wild potato	Evodia	Oregon grape
American elder	Fennel	Peppermint
Astaxanthan	Feverfew	Phellodendron
Barberry	Fo-ti	Pomegranate
Berberine	Garlic	Pseudoginseng (Panax)
Bishop's weed	Ginger	Red clover
Bitter orange	Ginkgo	Reishi mushrooms
Black cohosh	Ginseng	Resveratrol
Black mulberry	Goldthread	Rhodiola
Black pepper	Grapefruit	Sage
Blue-green algae	Green tea	Schisandra
Boswellia	Guggl	St. John's Wort
Cannabidiol	Higenamine	Sweet Annie
Cassia cinnamon	Hops	Syrian rue
Cat's claw	Hu zhang	Tahitian noni
Chamomile	Kava	Tiratricol
Coleus	Kratom	Tree turmeric
Conjugated linoleic acid	Licorice	Valerian
Cranberry	Lime	Vitamin A
Devil's claw	Marijuana	White pepper
DHEA	Melatonin	Wild cherry
Echinacea	Milk Thistle	Wolfberry (Goji juice)
Essiac (sheep sorrel)	Moringa	
Eucalyptus	Pseudoginseng (Panax)	

The following supplements or products may cause **problems with chemotherapy:**

Acetyl L Carnitine	Folic acid	Riboflavin (Vitamin B2)
Aloe	Glucosamine	St. John's Wort
Black cohosh	Glutamine	Theanine
Black pepper	N-acetyl glucosamine	
Devil's claw	Quercetin	

The following supplements or products may cause **problems with immunosuppressant medicines or cause health problems if your immune system is weak:**

Alfalfa	Goldenseal	Rhodiola
Ashwagandha	Goldenthread	Schisandra
Astragalus	Grapefruit	Selenium
Barberry	Kombucha	Shark cartilage
Berberine	Melatonin	Shiitake mushroom
Beta-glucans	Milk thistle	St. John's Wort
Black pepper	Oregon grape	Transfer factor
Blue-green algae	Peppermint	Tree turmeric
Boswellia	Phellodendron	Turmeric (curcumin)
Cat's claw	Probiotics	Vitamin E: more than 400 IU/day
Echinacea	Pseudoginseng (Panax)	White pepper
Ginseng	Quercetin	Wine (alcohol)
Glandular tissue (from brain, kidney, liver, thymus or spleen)	Resveratrol	

This is not a complete list of the precautions for their use. It is important to talk to your health care team about your use of any dietary/herbal supplement.