

# Herbs and Supplements



**Many individuals with cancer often use dietary and herbal products** to boost their health, improve their nutrition, or reduce side effects associated with treatment. Although some herbs and supplements are often seen as "natural" and safe, there is limited data on how these substances will interact with cancer treatment.

It is important to provide your care team with a list of all herbs and dietary supplements that you are currently taking, prior to starting your cancer treatment. This includes proprietary blends which may contain several ingredients.

It is also important that you do not begin taking any herbs and dietary supplements without first discussing with your care team.

Most herbs and dietary supplements have not been studied together with standard cancer treatments such as chemotherapy. In general, taking herbs and dietary supplements at the same time as your cancer treatment may cause unexpected side effects or reduce the effectiveness of cancer medications. For example:

- Turmeric and St. John's Wort can cause potentially dangerous interactions with several cancer medications.
- Turmeric has also been shown to potentially have estrogenic properties and should be avoided in hormone sensitive cancers such as breast.
- Herbs like ginger and garlic can interfere with anticoagulant drugs, such as warfarin, increasing the risk of bleeding.