



HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS AND CANCER TREATMENT

COMMON HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS WITH ANTIOXIDANT PROPERTIES

- Garlic
- High-dose Vitamin E & C
- Gingko Biloba
- Melatonin
- Ginseng
- Red Clover & CoQ10
- Grapeseed Extract
- Selenium
- Green Tea



POTENTIAL INTERACTIONS

May interfere with cancer killing effects of certain chemotherapy and radiation.



WHO SHOULD AVOID USE

- Patients undergoing radiation therapy
- Patients on some chemotherapy

COMMON HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS WITH ESTROGENIC PROPERTIES

- Black Cohosh
- Gingko Biloba
- Chasteberry
- Red Clover
- Dong Quai
- Soy Products
- Flax Seed Oil



POTENTIAL INTERACTIONS

Estrogenic effect may stimulate estrogen dependent tumor growth.



WHO SHOULD AVOID USE

- Breast cancer patients (especially those patients who are hormone positive)
- Endometrial cancer patients

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE BEGINNING A SUPPLEMENT

- Please check the label of your supplement for the full list of ingredients.
- Supplements can interact with prescription medications and chemotherapy. Herbal supplements have the potential to increase toxicity while a person is receiving chemotherapy, or possibly decrease its effectiveness.
- Because a product is labeled as “natural” doesn’t mean it’s always healthy or non-toxic. It may actually mean the product is less safe, because there is no way for healthcare providers to tell what is in the product.
- Claims about supplements found in magazines, websites, and on the radio can be over exaggerated and sometimes wrong. There is little to no research to support most of these claims.
- Manufacturers do have to follow good manufacturing practices to ensure that supplements are processed consistently and meet quality standards. However, there is no way to make sure the right ingredients are included in the appropriate amounts.
- Many supplements are processed through the liver and can change liver functions or cause liver toxicity.
- Manufacturers don’t need FDA approval in order to put a supplement on the market. They can claim that the product supports health or treats a disease only if they include a disclaimer that the FDA has not evaluated the claim.

COMMON HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS WITH ENZYME MODIFYING PROPERTIES

- Black Cohosh
- Curcumin (Turmeric)
- Echinacea
- Essiac
- Garlic
- Ginseng
- Goldenseal
- Grapeseed Extract
- Kava
- Licorice
- Milk Thistle
- Mistletoe (European)
- Nettle
- Reishi Mushroom
- Soy Extract
- St. John's Wort
- Valerian



POTENTIAL INTERACTIONS

May affect how the chemotherapy drug is broken down in the body and either increase or decrease how well it works.



WHO SHOULD AVOID USE

- Patients taking certain oral chemotherapy drugs

COMMON HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS WITH BLOOD THINNING PROPERTIES

- Curcumin (Turmeric)
- Dong Quai
- Evening Primrose
- Feverfew
- Fish Oil
- Garlic
- Gingko Biloba
- Ginger
- Ginseng
- Grapeseed Extract
- High-dose Vitamin E & C
- Maitake Mushroom
- Reishi Mushroom
- Selenium



POTENTIAL INTERACTIONS

May inhibit platelets' ability to clump together (clot) and increase the risk of bleeding.



WHO SHOULD AVOID USE

- Patients undergoing surgery
- Patients with low platelet counts
- Patients taking blood thinners

COMMON HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS WITH PHOTSENSITIVITY PROPERTIES

- Chrysanthemum
- Dong Quai
- Shiitake Mushroom
- St. John's Wort



POTENTIAL INTERACTIONS

Increases skin sensitivity to sunlight.



WHO SHOULD AVOID USE

- Patients undergoing radiation therapy

COMMON HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS WITH IMMUNE SYSTEM PROPERTIES

- Astragalus
- Maitake Mushroom
- Reishi Mushroom
- Echinacea
- Mistletoe (European)
- Turkey Tail Mushroom



POTENTIAL INTERACTIONS

May boost or suppress the immune system.



WHO SHOULD AVOID USE

- Patients taking immunosuppressants
- Lymphoma patients



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For additional Information, scan the code to visit: Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center's "About Herbs" Database: