

Blood Cancers/Disorders: 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**:

Alcohol	Dong Quai/Dang Gui	Nattokinase
Aloe	Evening Primrose	Pau d'arco
Astragalus/Huang Qi	Evodia	Peony
Berberine	Fennel	Policosanol
Billberry	Feverfew	Quercetin
Bishop's Weed	Fish Oil: doses above 3g/day	Red Clover
Black Currant	Flaxseed	Reishi Mushroom: doses above 3g/day
Black Pepper	Gamma Linolenic Acid	Rosemary
Black Tea	Garlic	Saw Palmetto
Blue-green Algae	Ginger	Scutellaria/Skullcap
Bogbean	Ginkgo	Selenium: doses above 10 mcg/kg/day
Bromelain	Ginseng	Sweet Clover
Burdock root	Goldenseal	Tiratricol
Caffeine	Green Tea	Turmeric
Carrageenan	Guggul	White Pepper
Cat's Claw	Heart's Ease	Willow Bark
Chamomile	Heigenamine	
Chondroitin	Holy Basil	
Cinchona	Horse Chestnut	
Cocoa	Hu Zhang	
Cod Liver Oil	Kinetin	
Coleus	Kudzu	
CoQ10	L-Arginine	
Danshen	Mangosteen	
DHEA	Maral Root	
Eicosapentaenoic Acid	Marijuana	
Essiac	Meadowsweet	
DHA	Melatonin	

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

Aloe	Burdock Root
Berberine	Cat's Claw
Black Pepper	CoQ10
Blue-green Algae	Theanine

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

Alcohol	Evodia	Marijuana
Berberine	Fennel	Melatonin
Bishop's Weed	Feverfew	Red Clover
Black Cohosh	Garlic	Reishi Mushrooms: doses above 3g/day
Black Pepper	Ginger	Resveratrol
Blue-green Algae	Ginkgo	Saw Palmetto
Cat's Claw	Ginseng	St. John's Wort
Chamomile	Green Tea	Tiratricol
Coleus	Guggul	Turmeric (contains curcumin)
Essiac	Higenamine	White Pepper
Evening Primrose	Hu Zhang	

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

Aloe	Saw Palmetto
Black Cohosh	St. John's Wort
Black Pepper	Theanine
Quercetin	

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

Astragalus	Ginseng	Resveratrol
Berberine	Goldenseal	Selenium: doses more than 10 mcg/kg/day
Black Pepper	Huang Qi	St. John's Wort
Blue-green Algae	Melatonin	Turmeric (contains curcumin)
Cat's Claw	Quercetin	White Pepper

The following supplements or products may cause **anti-inflammatory effects.**

Quercetin

This handout is not a complete list of all precautions for their use. It is important to talk to your health care team about your use of any of the following.