

CAM Herb/Drug Interactions

Herbal Supplement	Common Uses	Potential Problems	Potential Interactions With
Dong Quai (<i>Angelica</i>)	To treat menopausal symptoms, PMS, dysmenorrhea	Enhances bleeding	Anticoagulants
Echinacea	To treat colds, flu, and mild infections, especially upper respiratory infections	Hepatotoxicity; Intestinal upset	Other Hepatotoxic drugs; Anabolic steroids; Methotrexate
Ephedra (<i>Ma Huang</i> , <i>Ephedrine</i> , <i>Pseudoephedrine</i>)	To treat asthma, cough, and to induce weight loss	Seizures; Adverse cardiovascular events	Cardiac glycosides; General anesthesia; MAO inhibitors; Decongestants, stimulants
Garlic	To decrease cholesterol and blood clot formation	Enhances bleeding	Anticoagulants
Ginger	To relieve nausea	Enhances bleeding; CNS depression; Hypotension; Cardiac Arrhythmia; Hypoglycemia	Anticoagulants; Enhances the effects of barbiturates; Antihypertensives; Cardiac drugs; Hypoglycemic drugs
Ginkgo Biloba	To improve circulation, especially to brain, For memory loss, dizziness, and headache	Enhances bleeding; Cramps, muscle spasms	Anticoagulants
Ginseng	To increase energy and reduce stress	Enhances bleeding; Tachycardia and hypertension; Mania	Anticoagulants; Stimulants; Antihypertensives; Antidepressants/Phenelzine; Digoxin; Potentiates the effects of corticosteroids and estrogens
Goldenseal	Used a mild antibiotic to treat sore throats and upper respiratory infections	Increases fluid retention; Hypertension; Nausea; Nervousness	Diuretics; Antihypertensives
Kava Kava	To treat anxiety, nervousness, and insomnia	Upset stomach; Allergic skin reaction, yellow discoloration of skin, Central nervous system depression	Potentiates the effects of antidepressants, barbiturates, and benzodiazepines; Skeletal muscle relaxants; Anesthetics
Licorice	To treat hepatitis and peptic ulcers	Hypertension; Hypokalemia; Edema	Antihypertensives; Potentiates the effects of corticosteroids
SAM-e (<i>Sadenosyl-L-methionine</i>)	To treat depression or osteoarthritis	Mimics serotonin; Nausea, upset stomach	Drugs that can increase or mimic serotonin, such as antidepressants
St. John's Wort	To treat mild depression, anxiety, seasonal affective disorder	Enhances bleeding; hastens metabolic breakdown of drugs; contraindicated for organ transplant recipients	Anticoagulants; Antidepressants; Decreases the effectiveness of cyclosporine, antiviral drugs; Digoxin; Dextrometorphan; Prolongs the effects of general anesthetics; MAO inhibitors
Valerian	To treat insomnia, anxiety	Sedation; Digestion problems	Potentiates the effects of barbiturates

The AAOS Committee on Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) has compiled the following chart of commonly used herbal supplements and the potential hazards they pose. The information in this chart is based upon literature searches conducted on July and August of 2001, and may not be exhausted. User physicians should rely on their own judgement concerning the care of specific patients and use this chart for general guidance only. Common medical practice is that patients cease using most of these preparations at least 2 weeks prior to surgical interventions.