



# Thinking of Herbals?

## Check Carefully Before You Take Them With Medicines

**FACT:** More than 40 percent of Americans take dietary supplements

**FACT:** Some dietary supplements are known to interact in dangerous ways with medicines.

**FACT:** Mixing herbal supplements with your medicines may put you at risk.

**Check It Out!** The following list shows some (not all!) potential drug-herbal interactions for 10 popular herbs. Many are potentially dangerous interactions, such as the case of a 78 year-old woman on a blood thinner who reportedly on her own took ginkgo biloba for 2 months before having a serious brain hemorrhage. Some herbals may add to the effects of drugs (noted by + in list below). But these additive effects generally have not been well studied. **So think carefully!** Ask your doctor or pharmacists before mixing herbals with your drug therapy.

- Black Cohosh:** Baneberry, bug-wort, Squawroot, Rattleroot (*Cimicifuga racemosa*)
- Estrogens
  - Hormone Replacement Therapies
  - Lipid lowering drugs +
  - cisplatin, doxorubicin, docetaxel

- Cayenne** - Capsicum (*Capsicum frutescens*, *C. annum*)
- Monoamine oxidase inhibitors
  - Antiplatelet agents

- Echinacea** (*Echinacea angustifolia*, *E. pallida*, *E. purpurea*)
- Chemotherapy
  - Cisplatin
  - Cyclophosphamide
  - Docetaxel
  - Econazole +
  - Fluorouracil
  - Methotrexate
  - Paclitaxel

- Ginseng** (Asian ginseng, *Panax ginseng*, *P. quinquefolium*)
- Corticosteroids
  - Digoxin
  - Drugs which cause gynecomastia (calcium channel blockers, cardiac glycosides, methyl-dopa, phenothiazines, spiro-nolactone)
  - Estrogens
  - Hypoglycemic drugs
  - Furosemide
  - Influenza Virus Vaccine +

- Garlic** (*Allium sativum*)
- Aspirin
  - Chlorzoxazone
  - Dipyridamole +
  - Heparin (Hepalean)
  - Hyoglycemic agents
  - Ticlopidine
  - Warfarin (Coumadin)

- Ginkgo** (*Ginkgo biloba*)
- Aspirin
  - Anticonvulsants
  - Citalopram +
  - Clopidogrel
  - Cyclosporine +
  - Dipyridamole
  - Fluoxetine +
  - Fluvoxamine +
  - Glimepride
  - Glipizide
  - Glyburide
  - Haloperidol +
  - Heparin (Hepalean)
  - Metformin
  - Paroxetine +
  - Repaglinide
  - Sertaline +
  - Thiazide diuretics
  - Ticlopidine
  - Trazodone
  - Tricyclic Antidepressants
  - Warfarin

- Saw Palmetto** *Serenoa repens*
- Oral and patch contraceptives
  - Hormone-replacement therapies

- St. John's wort** (*Hypericum perforatum*)
- Atazanavir
  - Benzodiazepines
  - Carbamazepine
  - Chemotherapy
  - Cyclosporin
  - Digoxin
  - Fexofendadine
  - Fluvoamine
  - Fosamprenavir
  - Indinavir
  - Nefazodine
  - Omprezole
  - Oral Contraceptives
  - Paroxetine
  - Phenezine
  - Reserpine
  - Sertraline
  - Theophylline/Aminophylline
  - Trazodone
  - Tricyclic Antidepressants
  - Venlafaxine
  - Warfarin

- Milk Thistle:** Silymarin (*Silybum marianum*),
- No know adverse interactions with drugs. Efficacy to limit drug-induced liver damage has not been shown in rigorous studies.

**Caution:** This is not a complete list. Consult your doctor or pharmacist before taking drugs and herbals.

+ May add to the effects of other medicines  
\*\* Drug and herbal bottle labels often do not list potential interactions.