

**ADVERSE DRUG EFFECTS AND INTERACTIONS CAUSED BY  
FOODS AND HERBALS**

**PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET**

**What are adverse drug effects and interactions?**

Adverse drug effects are any effect of a drug other than the intended effect. Many medications, including herbals and vitamins, have powerful ingredients that interact with the human body in different ways. The foods we eat, our lifestyle, and illness can have an impact on our body's reaction to the medications, herbals and vitamins we take. Some of these reactions are harmless; however others may make the product less effective or may even cause dangerous side effects or other problems. Below is a table of herbal drug interactions and side effects. This is a partial list and is meant to serve as a reminder that all medications have the potential for interactions. If you have questions regarding any of the medications that you take (prescription, over-the-counter, herbals and vitamins) consult with a health care professional.

**How can I get more information?**

Greenwich Hospital Pharmacology Consultation Service is available to answer questions or for private consultation (by appointment). Call 203.863.4365 for information or to schedule an appointment.

*For more Patient Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at [www.greenhosp.org](http://www.greenhosp.org) and click on Patients & Visitors, then Patient Education.*

## Adverse Drug Effects/Drug Interactions of Selected Herbal or Food Products

DRUG	HERBAL / FOOD	ADVERSE EFFECTS / DRUG INTERACTIONS REPORTED
<b>Alprazolam</b> (Xanax)	Kava	Extreme drowsiness
<b>Amantadine</b>	Quinine	Increases the likelihood of side effects including unsteadiness and confusion
<b>Amoxicillin and ampicillin</b>	Khat	Delayed or decreased absorption of amoxicillin and ampicillin
<b>Buspirone</b> (Buspar)	Grapefruit juice	Increases the likelihood of side effects
<b>Calcium channel blockers</b> (Amlodipine [Norvasc], Felodipine [Plendil], Nifedipine [Procardia/Adalat], Nisoldipine [Sular])	Grapefruit juice	Increases the likelihood of side effects including very low blood pressure and a slowed heart rate
<b>Carbamazepine</b> (Tegretol)	Grapefruit juice Quinine	Increases the likelihood of side effects
<b>Coumadin</b> (Warfarin)	Foods high in vitamin K: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alfalfa tablets</li> <li>• Broccoli</li> <li>• Brussel sprouts</li> <li>• Collard greens</li> </ul>	Decreased blood-thinning effect (More risk for clotting).
<b>Coumadin</b> (Warfarin)	Green tea Ginko Garlic Feverfew Ginger herbal supplements (normal dietary intake is not restricted).	Increased blood-thinning effect (More risk for bleeding).

### Adverse Drug Effects/Drug Interactions of Selected Herbal or Food Products (continued)

<b>Digoxin</b>	Quinine Natural black licorice Hawthorn Ginseng (Siberian) St. John's Wort	Increases the likelihood of medication side effects and toxicity.
<b>Fosamax (Alendronate)</b>	Wait an hour after taking other medications or food before taking Fosamax. Is ineffective when combined with any substance.	Osteoporosis will not improve.
<b>Lithium</b>	Herbs with diuretic properties (broom, buchu, dandelion, juniper)	Can cause lithium to accumulate in the body making the potential side effects more likely to occur
<b>Lipitor, Mevacor, Zocor</b>	Grapefruit juice	Increases the likelihood of medication side effects
<b>Phenelzine</b>	Ginseng (Siberian)	Difficulty sleeping, shakiness, tension headaches, irritability and hallucinations
<b>Phenobarbital</b>	Quinine	Increases the likelihood of medication side effects
<b>Spirolactone</b>	Licorice	Low potassium level desired effect of licorice is blocked by Spirolactone. May lead to muscle weakness.
<b>SSRIs (Paxil, Prozac, Zoloft, Celexa, Luvox, Lexapro)</b>	St. John's Wort	May cause confusion, difficulty with speech, nausea, weakness and fatigue; (may occur even 10 days after paroxetine is discontinued)

*Adapted from: US Pharmacist \* May 2000; U. S. Food and Drug Administration National Consumers League 1998*