

SUPPLEMENTS TO DISCONTINUE BEFORE & AFTER SURGERY

Nowadays, many patients are taking nutritional supplements in increasing amounts. While generally beneficial and safe, their use around the time of surgery may not be desirable. Certain nutritional supplements may cause adverse reactions during or after surgery, including: prolonged bleeding, interference with anesthesia, cardiovascular disturbances, and interactions with prescription drugs.

To ensure surgical safety, please discontinue the use of the following nutritional supplements, two weeks prior to surgery and two weeks after surgery.

Vitamin/Supplement	Uses	Effects
Bilberry	Used to strengthen blood vessels, improve circulation and can be useful in treating eye disorders	Can affect blood cells called platelets and may increase bleeding
Cayenne (Red Pepper)	Used to lower levels of cholesterol in the blood, which can help to lower blood pressure	May affect platelets and an overdose can cause significant drop in body temperature
Dong Quai	An all-purpose women's herb use to provide energy and regulate female hormones	An active constituent in dong quai is a coumarin-like compound, which may increase existing anticoagulant (blood-thinning) medications.
Echinacea	Used to boost the immune system and for infections of the respiratory tract	May negatively affect the liver when general anesthetics or certain other medications are used
Evening Primrose Oil	Used to treat acne, improve hair and skin quality and treat pain conditions such as menstrual cramps, endometriosis, multiple sclerosis and nerve damage	May interact with anesthesia resulting in seizures
Feverfew	Fever-reducing, used mainly to treat migraines	May increase bleeding, especially in patients taking certain blood-thinning medications
Fish Oil	Used for lowering blood pressure, cholesterol and triglyceride levels and reducing the risks of heart disease	Has blood-thinning properties which can be problematic during surgery
Flaxseed Oil	Used to treat and prevent heart disease and relieve a variety of inflammatory disorders and hormone related problems	May increase the risks of bleeding during and after surgery
Garlic	Used therapeutically to prevent and treat atherosclerosis and elevated cholesterol	Can augment the effects of blood-thinners and NSAIDs causing abnormal bleeding time
Ginger	Stimulates the digestive system and helps relieve motion sickness, nausea and vomiting	May alter bleeding time and interfere with cardiac and anticoagulant medications
Ginkgo Biloba	Improves blood circulation by strengthening the vascular system and inhibiting platelet aggregation. Also used to prevent mental deterioration in the elderly	Has significant blood-thinning activity which is three times stronger than Vitamin E
Ginseng	A so-called adaptogen (increases physiological resistance to stress) and an antioxidant. Commonly taken to enhance physical and cognitive performance	Acts as an anticoagulant and may interact with cardiac, high-blood pressure medications and blood-glucose lowering medications
Hawthorne	Used for deteriorating heart function and may be helpful for angina, arteriosclerosis and some mild types of abnormal heart rhythms	Can enhance the effects of the heart medication digitalis (Lanoxin or Digoxin)
Kava Kava	Used to reduce stress-related anxiety and the effects of anxiety disorders	May potentiate the effects of medications including barbiturates, alcohol, antidepressants, antipsychotics and general anesthetics
Licorice Root	Used for coughs and as a soothing remedy for the skin	Glycyrrhizic acid in real licorice may cause high blood pressure, lower potassium levels in the blood and enhance tissue swelling
Ma Huang	More widely known as ephedra, used for weight loss and energy supplement until banned by the FDA in 2003	Can affect the cardiovascular system including hypertension, rapid heart rate, cardiomyopathy and abnormal heart rhythm
Melatonin	Used to counteract sleeplessness and jet lag	May potentiate the central nervous system effects of barbiturates and general anesthetics
Red Clover	Used to treat a number of conditions associated with menopause	May potentiate existing anticoagulant medications
St. John's Wort	Used to treat mild to moderate depression and seasonal affective disorder	May interact with other anti-depressant medications
Valerian	Eases insomnia, stress related anxiety and nervous restlessness	May increase the effects of other anti-anxiety medications or prescription painkillers
Vitamin E	Strong antioxidant and may protect cells from free radical damage. May play a role in treatment of cardiovascular disease and other aging-related degenerative disorders	Has anti-clotting activity that can prolong bleeding time during surgery
Yohimbe	Used as a sexual stimulant and as a potential treatment for male impotence	Can raise the heart rate and blood pressure, and increase the potency of anesthetics