

HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS IN CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

Use of herbal supplements may be unsafe for CKD patients due to unpredictable pharmacokinetics, drug/herb interactions, hemodynamic alterations, effect on blood pressure and blood glucose, and/or the potential for electrolyte abnormalities. These are some facts about herbs every CKD patient should know:

- Very few herbs have been studied in CKD patients therefore patients need to be very cautious about their use of these products.
- The government does not regulate herbal supplements, so the exact content of these products is unknown. Without regulation, there are no requirements for testing, so the purity, safety and effectiveness of the products are unknown. Patients should be instructed to choose products that are USP certified, NSF verified, or have been tested by an independent product testing company such as Consumer Lab.
- Products may contain minerals harmful to CKD patients, such as potassium.
- Many herbs can interact with prescription drugs. A few examples are St. John's Wort, ephedra, Echinacea, ginkgo, garlic, ginseng, ginger, dong quai and blue cohosh.
- Remind patients that it is important to inform their doctor, nurse, dietitian and/or pharmacist of any herbs, vitamins, or medications they are taking to avoid potential complications

Herbs that may be harmful to the kidneys

- Aristolochic acid
- Artemisia absinthium (wormwood plant)
- Asparagus root
- Autumn crocus
- Bucha leaves
- Cat's Claw
- Chuifong tuokuwan (Black Pearl)
- Cianidanol
- Horse chestnut
- Juniper berries
- Lovage root
- Parsley herb/root
- Periwinkle
- Sassafras
- Taxus celebica
- Tung shueh
- Uva Ursi
- Vandelia Cordifolia

Herbs that may be harmful in chronic kidney disease

- Alfalfa
- Aloe
- Bayberry
- Blue Cohosh
- Broom
- Buckthorn
- Capsicum
- Cascara
- Coltsfoot
- Dandelion
- Ginger
- Ginseng
- Goldenrod
- Horsetail
- Licorice
- Mate
- Nettle
- Noni juice
- Panax
- Rhubarb
- Senna
- Vervain
- Watercress
- White Sandalwood

Adapted from *Herbal Supplements in Chronic Kidney Disease* (<http://www.kidney.org>)

References:

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