

# Using Herbs

Herbs are also called herbals, herbal therapy and dietary supplements. They are natural products often made from plants. People eat or drink these products to try to improve their health. How well herbs work is not known.

## What You Need to Know:

- **Tell your doctors, nurses, pharmacist, and dietitian which herbs you are taking. Talk to them before starting new ones.**
- Herbs are not regulated, tested or controlled like medicines in the United States.
- Ingredients, dose and effects of the same herb may vary. Herbs can contain items that are not listed on the label. Dangerous things like lead, mercury, and arsenic have been found in herbs.
- You do not need a prescription from a doctor to buy them.
- Herbs can be very expensive.
- Herbs come in their natural state of leaves, bark, fruit, stems, or flowers. Others are made into pills or liquids. Herbs may not be safe even from natural sources.
- Herbs may make you feel better but they can effect your treatment. For example:
  - Ginkgo biloba may cause bleeding.
  - Kava may increase the effect of sleeping and relaxation medicine.
- Some people have allergies to herbs.
- Herbs are not tested on children or pregnant women and can cause miscarriages.

## If you are taking or planning to take any herbs:

- **Talk to your doctor before starting a new herb.**
- Read the labels carefully. Look for the name of the herb and the ingredients.
- Start with a low dose. Then slowly increase the dose to the recommended level.
- Take only one new herb at a time. Wait at least 24 hours before starting another one. This will help if you find the cause of an allergy or side effect.
- Stop taking any herbal right away if you have a fast beating heart, shortness of breath, nausea or vomiting, mild or severe itching, or bleeding. **Go the Emergency Room or call your doctor.**
- Stop taking it if you have not seen results in a few weeks.

# 使用草药

草药也称为草木植物、草药疗法和饮食补充物，常常是由植物制成的天然产品。人们食用这些产品以图改善健康。草药的疗效如何尚不清楚。

## 您需要知道以下各项：

- 请告诉您的医生、护士、药剂师和营养师您正在服用的草药。在开始用新草药前请先和他们谈一谈。
- 草药不受管制，未经测试也不象美国的药物那样得到控制。
- 同一草药的成分、剂量和效果有可能不一样。草药可能含一些标签上未列示的成分。草药中已发现有危险成分，如铅、汞和砷。
- 草药不需医生处方即可购买。
- 草药可能很昂贵。
- 草药呈天然状，如树叶、树皮、果实、茎或花状。其他则被制成药片或药液。即便草药是天然状也可能会不安全。
- 草药可能会使您感觉好转，但草药能影响您的治疗。例如：
  - Ginkgo biloba 即银杏叶可能会引起出血。
  - Kava 即卡瓦胡椒可能会加强安眠和放松药物的药效。
- 有些人对草药过敏。
- 草药未经儿童或怀孕女性测试，可能会引起流产。

## 如果您正在服用或计划服用任何草药：

- 在开始用一种新草药前请先和您的医生谈一谈。
- 请仔细阅读标签，找出草药名称和成分。
- 请从低剂量开始。然后渐渐增加到建议剂量。
- 一次请只服用一种新草药。至少等 24 个小时之后再开始用另一种。这样将有助于您发现过敏原因或副作用。
- 如果您心跳快、呼吸急促、恶心呕吐、有轻微或严重瘙痒或出血，请即停用任何草药。去急诊室或打电话给您的医生。
- 若几个星期之后不见疗效，请停用草药。

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