

HERB-DRUG INTERACTIONS - THE KEY PLAYERS

KEY: * theoretically possible ‡ experimental † isolated case report/s clinical study/ies

<i>HERB</i>	<i>DRUG</i>	<i>INTERACTION</i>	<i>COMMENT</i>
<i>CAYENNE</i> <i>(Capsicum spp.)</i>	ASPIRIN	Herb protects against stomach irritation	Excessive doses may be required for effect *
	ACE INHIBITOR <i>(Antihypertensive)</i>	Increased side effects Reduces drug action	Aggravates cough, may affect blood pressure *
	MANY DRUGS	Increased bioavailability	Cayenne enhances gut absorption *‡†
<i>EPHEDRA</i> <i>(Ma Huang)</i>	CAFFEINE	Additive effect	Increases thermogenesis (metabolism) *‡
	MAOI's <i>(Antidepressant, antihypertensive)</i>	Additive effect on neurotransmitter levels	Elevation of blood pressure *† (Ephedra alone can cause this)
	BETA BLOCKERS <i>(Anti-anginal, anti-arrhythmic)</i>	Reduces drug performance	May cause arrhythmias or BP elevation *
	EPHEDRINE <i>(Bronchodilator)</i>	Additive effect increases drug toxicity	May cause arrhythmias or BP elevation *
	STEROIDS <i>(Anti-inflammatory)</i>	Increased steroid drug clearance	May reduce steroid therapy effectiveness
<i>GARLIC</i> <i>(Allium sativum)</i>	WARFARIN <i>(Anticoagulant)</i>	Additive blood thinning effects	Spontaneous bleeding *‡† Advise prescribing physician
	GENERAL ANESTHETIC	Blood thinning action of garlic	Risk of excess bleeding post operatively *‡† Advise surgical team

HERB DRUG INTERACTIONS - THE KEY PLAYERS (cont.)

HERB	DRUG	INTERACTION	COMMENT
GINGER (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)	CHEMO-THERAPY	Reduced side effects (nausea)	Probable, trials inconclusive *†
	GENERAL ANESTHETIC	Herb reduces after-effects of anesthesia	Nausea and vomiting reduced *†
	WARFARIN (<i>Anticoagulant</i>)	Synergy, possible increased coagulation	Probable but studies inconclusive *‡†
	MANY DRUGS	May increase drug bioavailability	Ginger increases gut absorption *‡
GINKGO (<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>)	ASPIRIN	Increased anti-coagulation	Spontaneous bleeding *‡†
	WARFARIN (<i>Anticoagulant</i>)	Increased anti-coagulation	Brain hemorrhage (intracerebral) *‡†
	Acetaminphen caffeine & ergotamine	Unknown	Brain hemorrhage (subdural) †
	GENERAL ANESTHETIC	Blood thinning action of herb	Risk of excess bleeding post operation *‡† Advise surgical team pre-operatively
GINSENG (<i>Panax ginseng</i>)	WARFARIN (<i>Anticoagulant</i>)	Potential	Spontaneous bleeding *‡†
	ALCOHOL	Increased alcohol clearance	Stimulates alcohol metabolism *‡

HERB DRUG INTERACTIONS - THE KEY PLAYERS (cont.)

HERB	DRUG	INTERACTION	COMMENT
GINSENG <i>(Panax ginseng continued)</i>	INFLUENZA VACCINE	Synergy, enhances resistance	Reduces flu symptoms frequency & severity *
	INSULIN	Synergy, antidiabetic actions of herb	Improves blood sugar & diabetic Sx *‡†
KAVA KAVA <i>(Piper methysticum)</i>	ALCOHOL	May reduce alcohol toxicity	One trial supports interaction Combination not recommended
	BENZODIAZEPINES <i>(Sedative)</i>	Possible additive effects	No clinical evidence *‡ Combination not recommended
	MAOI's <i>(Antidepressant, antihypertensive)</i>	Possible additive effects	No clinical evidence *‡ Combination not recommended
	GENERAL ANESTHETICS	Possible additive effects	No clinical evidence * Do not take herb pre-operatively
LICORICE ROOT <i>(Glycyrrhiza glabra)</i>	STEROIDS <i>(Anti-inflammatory)</i>	Potentiates drug levels/activity	Herb can help steroid drug withdrawal *‡†
	ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES	May increase side effects	May cause water retention and raise blood pressure *‡†

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Adapted from Interactions™: IBIS Guide to Drug-Herb and Drug-Nutrient Interactions™

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<i>LICORICE ROOT</i> (<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> <i>continued</i>)	ASPIRIN	Reduces drug induced stomach bleeding	Licorice also helps heal gastric ulcers *††
	ANTIBIOTICS	Drugs reduce herb activity	Herb needs gut flora for bioavailability *
	DIURETICS (loop/thiazide) DIGOXIN (<i>Cardiac glycoside</i>)	Increased drug toxicity due to possible increased potassium loss	Caution in cardiac cases & Digoxin for potassium loss toxicity *†
<i>MILK THISTLE</i> (<i>Silybum marianum</i>)	MANY DRUGS (Acetaminophen, alcohol etc.)	Herb reduces drug toxicity to liver	Herb increases liver detox capacity & protects liver from drug damage *††
	CHEMOTHERAPY	Herb reduces toxic side effects of chemo	Herb does not reduce anticancer action of cisplatin *†† Obtain qualified professional advice!
	GENERAL ANESTHETICS	Herb helps reduces liver toxicity of anesthetics	Take 3 weeks pre-operatively * Advise surgical team
	CYCLOSPORINE (<i>Immuno-suppressive</i>)	Herb reduces drug blood levels	Potentially dangerous for transplant patients *

HERB DRUG INTERACTIONS - THE KEY PLAYERS (cont.)

HERB	DRUG	INTERACTION	COMMENT
ST JOHN'S WORT (<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>)	SSRI's (<i>Antidepressant</i>)	Synergy. Additive serotonin-like effects	Risk of "serotonin syndrome" *† Avoid concurrent use
	BENZODIAZEPINES (<i>Sedative</i>)	Potential drug effects	SJW used to help wean from benzodiazepines *‡† Professional supervision required
	MAOI's (<i>Antidepressant, antihypertensive</i>)	Possible potentiation drug effects	No clinical evidence *
	CYCLOSPORINE (<i>Immuno-suppressive</i>)	Herb reduces blood level drug, lowers drug effect	Risk of transplant rejection *† Notify prescribing physician
	DIGOXIN (<i>Cardiac glycoside</i>)	Herb reduces blood level drug, reduces drug effect	May cause arrhythmias * Notify prescribing physician
	INDINAVIR (<i>Protease inhibitor</i>)	Herb reduces blood level drug, reduces drug effect	May cause failure of therapy in AIDS *‡
	MANY DRUGS (exact number & significance not known)	Herb activates liver clearance, reduces drug levels or effects	Theophylline, phenprocoumon *‡† Notify prescribing physician of SJW use

HERB DRUG INTERACTIONS - THE KEY PLAYERS (cont.)

HERB	DRUG	INTERACTION	COMMENT
VALERIAN <i>(Valeriana officinalis)</i>	ALCOHOL	Herb reduces drug hypnotic effects	Clinical studies and lab studies conflict †
	BARBITURATES <i>(Anticonvulsant, sedative)</i>	Herb amplifies drug effects	No clinical studies ‡
	BENZODIAZEPINES <i>(Sedative)</i>	Additive effect	Interaction used to wean off drugs *† Valerian/SJW combo more effective than diazepam
YOHIMBE <i>(Pausinystalia yohimbine)</i>	TRICYCLICS (TCA's) <i>(Antidepressant)</i>	Hypertension risk increased	Yohimbe alone may cause raised BP * Use with any psychotropic drug not recommended. *‡†

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