Introduction:

The use of alternative medicines, including herbs and supplements is widespread. This pamphlet is designed to assist in providing general information about herbs and supplements. The currently reported uses are based on historic information and are not an endorsement of safety and effectiveness.

The following Herb and supplements are considered unsafe by the FDA:

Herbs:
Ephedra (ma huang and Chinese ephedra)
Comfrey (Symphytum species)
Germander (Teucrium chamaedris)
Willow bark

Supplements:
Gamma butyrolactone (precursor to the “date rape” drug, GBH)
L-tryptophan (an amino acid)
Geranium supplements
Selenium (in doses of about 800 mcg to 1,000 mcg per day)
Niacin (in slow-release dosages of 500 mg or more per day or immediate-release dosages of 750 mg or more per day)
Vitamin A (in dosages of 25,000 or more IU per day)
Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine) (in dosages exceeding 100 mg per day)

The following is an additional red flag list: These substances are too toxic as currently marketed to recommend. Although not all are well documented, they may have potentially life-threatening adverse effects associated with their use.

Aconite (Aconitum species)
Arnica (Arnica montana)
Calamus [Acorus calamus (European, Indian varieties)]
Alfalfa seeds (Medicago sativa)
Aristolochia (Aristolochia fangchi)
Bitterroot (Apocynum)
Red Flag List (continued):

Borage (*Borago officinalis*)
Chaparral (*Larrea tridentata*)
Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*)
Deadly Nightshade (*Atropa Belladonna*)
Dong quai (*Angelica archangelica*)
*Heliotropium* species
Jimson Weed (*Datura Stramonium*)
Khat (*Catha edulis*)
Kombucha home-brewed teas
Lobelia (*Lobelia inflata*)
Mandrake or Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*)
Mistletoe (*Phoradendron*)
Paraguay tea (*Ilex paraguayensis*)
Pau d’Arco (*Tabebuia heptaphylla*)
Pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*)
*Petasites hybridus*
Pokeweed (*Phytolacca Americana*)
Rue (*Ruta graveolens*)
Sassafrass (*Sassafras albidum*)
Skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*)
*Seneceio* species
*Sophora flavescens*
Wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*)
**Herbs:**

**Echinacea:**
*(Echinacea purpurea)*

**Use:** Echinacea is a native American plant. Echinacea is commonly used topically as a wound healing agent, and is taken internally to stimulate the immune system to prevent colds and upper respiratory infections.

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** There are no known acute toxic effects of echinacea. Allergic reactions are possible. Often it causes a tingling sensation on the tongue. If nausea or diarrhea occur, use less or stop using it. Do not take Echinacea if you have an autoimmune disease, are pregnant or breast-feeding. Limit use to short intervals such as a few days to two weeks.

See drug interactions section.

**Feverfew:**
*(Tanacetum parthenium)*

**Use:** Commonly used for migraines. Sometimes used for inflamed joints or psoriasis.

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** Contraindicated in people with ragweed allergies. Nervousness, tension, headaches, insomnia, and tiredness have been reported from feverfew. The most common side effect reported is mouth sores. Do not take if you are pregnant or breast-feeding.

See drug interactions section.
Herbs: (continued)

Flaxseed Oil
*(Linum usitatissimum)*:

**Use:** Flaxseed is used for arthritis, preventing heart disease, for cancer, anxiety, benign prostatic hypertrophy, constipation, vaginitis, and weight loss.

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** Seeds are contraindicated in bowel obstruction, throat strictures and bowel inflammation. Flax seed may delay absorption of drugs. Therefore, do not take medications with flax seed.

Garlic:
*(Allium sativum)*

**Use:** Garlic is a common herb used in cooking. It is used to slow the process of atherosclerosis, reduce cholesterol, control high blood pressure, as an antibacterial agent and to reduce blood sugar levels.

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** Garlic reduces blood sugar and may effect glucose control in diabetic patients. Garlic may also cause burning of the mouth, esophagus, and stomach; nausea; sweating and light-headedness. Garlic dust can induce an asthmatic reaction. May cause colic in infants if breast feeding.

See drug interactions section.

Ginkgo:
*(Ginkgo biloba)*

**Use:** The ginkgo is the oldest living tree species in the world. An extract of the leaves has been used for cerebral insufficiency, memory impairment, circulatory disorders such as Raynaud’s disease, asthma, anxiety/stress, dementias, and tinnitus.

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** Possible side effects of ginkgo include headache, irritability and restlessness, dizziness, heart palpitations and gastrointestinal and skin reactions. Severe side effects are rare with ingestion of ginkgo extracts.
Herbs: (continued)

Ginkgo:
*(Ginkgo biloba)* (continued)

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** Contact with the fleshy fruit pulp causes an allergic dermatitis, similar to poison ivy. Ginkgo should not be used if you are pregnant or breast-feeding.

See drug interactions section.

Ginseng:
*(Panax ginseng)* – Korean ginseng

**Use:** Ginseng is promoted for its anti-stress effects. It has been used for atherosclerosis; blood and bleeding disorders; colitis; and to relieve symptoms of aging, cancer, and senility; and to boost the immune system.

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** The most common side effects of Ginseng are nervousness and excitation. Over use can cause headache, insomnia, and palpitations. Use with caution in patients with high blood pressure. The inability to concentrate has also been reported with long-term use. Ginseng may lower blood glucose in diabetic patients. Ginseng should not be used if you are pregnant or breast-feeding.

See drug interactions section.

Goldenseal:
*(Hydrastis canadensis)*

**Use:** Goldenseal has been used traditionally to treat mucus membrane inflammation and gastrointestinal upset. The plant possesses astringent and weak antiseptic properties which may

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** Do not take if you are pregnant, breast-feeding, or have high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, or glaucoma. High doses can be toxic causing nausea,
Herbs: (continued)

Goldenseal:  
(Hydrastis canadensis)  
(continued)

Use: be modestly effective in treating minor oral problems. Goldenseal does not mask urine drug screens. The topical use of goldenseal extracts in sterile eyewashes persists although there is little clinical evidence for its effectiveness.

Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects: vomiting diarrhea, central nervous system stimulation and respiratory failure. Goldenseal has also been reported to cause numbness and tingling sensation, decrease white blood cells and stimulate or relax the uterus. Use for short periods of time.

Grape seed  
(Vitis vinifera):

Use: Grape seed is used for circulatory disorders, including varicose veins, atherosclerosis, inflammation, heart disease, and stroke.

Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects: None at this time.

See drug interactions section.

Kava-Kava:  
(Piper methysticum)

Use: Kava-Kava is known as a popular drink in the South Pacific. It is generally used as a sedative for sleep enhancement and controlling anxiety.

Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects: Kava-Kava can effect the central nervous system with a reduction in anxiety and sleep enhancement. Heavy use can lead to poor health, including dry skin and changes in vision. High doses can lead to muscle weakness and there is some evidence that it may cause high blood pressure in the lungs. It should not be used if you are pregnant or nursing. It should not be taken for greater than 3 months.

See drug interactions section
Herbs: (continued)

Saw Palmetto:
(Serenoa repens)

Use: Saw Palmetto is used for urination problems in the management of prostatic enlargement (benign prostatic hypertrophy) stages 1 & 2.

Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects: Adverse effects are rarely experienced with the use of saw palmetto extract. Rarely, stomach problems and headaches have been reported. Large amounts of the berry are reported to cause diarrhea.

St. John’s Wort:
(Hypericum perforatum)

Use: St. John’s Wort has been traditionally used as an herbal treatment in the management of anxiety and depression, as a diuretic, for gastritis, and insomnia.

Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects: Photosensitivity and rash are the most common side effects. Some people experience fatigue, stiff neck or gastrointestinal symptoms. Large amounts of St. John’s Wort may interact with tyramine containing foods; therefore avoid eating the following foods high in tyramine:
Acidophilus
Aged or dried meats and fish
Anchovies (canned)
Avocado (ripe)
Banana (ripe)
Beer/ale (regular & alcohol free)
Bologna
Broad beans and pods
Canned meats, poultry & fish
Cheese *
Chocolate
Fava beans
Frankfurters
Liver, (esp. chicken & beef)
Herbs: (continued)

St. John’s Wort:  
(*Hypericum perforatum*)  
(continued)

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:**

Meat extracts  
Meat tenderizer or meats marinated over 24 hours  
Monosodium glutamate  
Mushrooms (pickled, canned)  
Peanut butter  
Pickled herring or kipper  
Raspberries  
Salami  
Sardines  
Sauerkraut  
Sausages/pepperoni  
Sour cream  
Soybeans  
Soy sauce  
Vanilla concentrate  
Wine (red, chianti, port, sherry, vermouth)  
Yeast extract  
Yogurt  
* Especially brie, camembert, cheddar, swiss (emmentaler), gouda, gruyere, mozzarella, parmesan, processed american, provolone, romano, roquefort, and stilton.

See drug interactions section.
Herbs: (continued)

Valerian:  
*(Valeriana officinalis)*

**Use:** Valerian is used for restlessness and as a sedative, sleep aid.

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** This appears to be a relatively safe herb. The few reported side effects include morning grogginess, headaches, excitability, uneasiness, heart disturbances and insomnia, especially if taken regularly for two to three weeks without a break.

See drug interactions section.
Supplements:

Carnitine
(Levocarnitine):

**Use:** Levocarnitine administration may enhance energy balance in skeletal and heart muscle. Levocarnitine may improve walking distance in patients with intermittent claudication; limited data suggest beneficial effects in diabetic vascular changes and congestive heart failure. Carnitine has been used to enhance athletic performance, chronic fatigue, Alzheimer’s dementia, anorexia, low blood sugar, correct lipoproteins in patients on hemodialysis and kidney failure, angina pectoris, coronary vascular disease, heart failure, diabetes, high cholesterol, high triglycerides, peripheral vascular disease.

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** Adverse effects of levocarnitine include nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, and weakness or loss of strength.

Cholestin:

**Use:** Cholestin is a Chinese herbal remedy that is used to lower cholesterol levels. It is made from rice and fermented with red yeast. The active ingredient in Cholestin is chemically identical to lovastatin (which is sold by prescription as Mevacor®). Cholestin appears to lower cholesterol levels about as much as Mevacor® and other statin drugs and it is less costly. It should be used in conjunction with a low-fat diet and exercise.

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** Not known.
Supplements (continued):

Chromium:

**Use:** Chromium is a trace element that is required for normal metabolic function. It is used for weight loss, glucose control in diabetes, lowering cholesterol and enhancing athletic performance.

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** Certain forms of chromium are associated with the development of topical skin irritation. Chromium can cause liver and kidney disease and blood disorders. Chromium may lower blood glucose in diabetic patients.

See drug interactions section.

CoEnzyme Q-10 (Co-Q10):

**Use:** CoQ10 is used for congestive heart failure, angina, diabetes, high blood pressure, breast cancer, Huntington’s disease, reduce toxicity from doxorubicin chemotherapy, exercise intolerance, chronic fatigue symptoms, stimulating the immune system in AIDS, and male infertility. Co-Q10 is often used as a supplement with lipid lowering drugs.

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** Taking Coenzyme Q-10 can lead to gastritis, loss of appetite, nausea and diarrhea. When taking large amounts liver enzyme tests may be effected.

See drug interactions section.

Creatine:

**Use:** Creatine is promoted to enhance creatine muscle stores, improve muscle performance, and improve muscle appearance. Benefits are most likely to be observed in athletes in power sports (such as power lifting) and sprinters, but not in endurance sports.

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** Nausea and diarrhea have been occasionally reported with creatine. High doses may carry risk of kidney and liver damage. Long-term safety data is not available. Large quantities may increase serum creatinine levels.
Supplements (continued):

**DHEA:**

**Use:** Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) is a steroid hormone produced by the adrenal glands. DHEA is promoted as an anti-aging, anti-cancer miracle supplement.

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** DHEA SHOULD NOT be regarded as a dietary supplement, but as a potent drug that may increase risk of cancer and heart disease.

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**Glucosamine/Chondroitin:**

**Use:** Is used to treat osteoarthritis, to reduce joint pain from cartilage failure.

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** Glucosamine is well-tolerated. Short-term use can cause mild stomach problems including nausea, heartburn, diarrhea, and constipation, drowsiness, skin reactions, and headache.

See drug interactions section.

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**Melatonin:**

**Use:** Melatonin is a hormone that has recently been the subject of research for use in insomnia, overcoming jet lag, improving effectiveness of the immune system, cancer prevention, and use as an anti-oxidant. It’s use in short-term treatment of insomnia shows promise.

**Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects:** Side affects associated with Melatonin use include headache, heavy head, and transient depression, daytime fatigue, drowsiness, dizziness, abdominal cramps and irritability. Melatonin has aggravated depressive symptoms in psychiatric patients. Long-term use of melatonin has not been studied, therefore the potential for adverse effects is unknown.

See drug interactions section.
Supplements (continued):

Niacin
(Vitamin B₃):

Use: For use in people with high cholesterol that don’t respond sufficiently to diet and weight loss, peripheral vascular disease and circulation disorders. To correct niacin acid deficiency, prevent and treat pellagra.

Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects: Contraindicated in people with liver disease, peptic ulcer, severe low blood pressure, and allergy to niacin. Use with caution in people with gout. Large doses should be administered with caution to patients with unstable angina, coronary artery disease, gall bladder disease, liver disease, and diabetes. Can cause flushing, headache, bloating, flatulence, nausea, changes in liver function, tingling or burning of the extremities. Rarely rapid heart rate, fainting, dizziness, rash, blurred vision, and wheezing.

See drug interactions section.

Vitamin E
(alpha-tocopherol):

Use: Vitamin E is used for improving physical endurance, increasing energy, preventing allergies, for asthma, infections, protection against negative effects of air pollution, preventing aging, for Alzheimer’s disease, night cramps, inflammatory skin disorders, burns, reducing risk of coronary artery disease, preventing heart disease, improving circulation, for angina, intermittent claudication, cystic fibrosis, 

Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects: Vitamin E is seldom associated with adverse effects. Rarely, vitamin E causes nausea, diarrhea, intestinal cramps, fatigue, weakness, headache, blurred vision, rash, gonadal dysfunction, and creatinuria. Topical application of vitamin E has been associated with contact dermatitis, inflammatory reactions, and eczematous lesions.
Supplements (continued):

Vitamin E
(α-tocopherol)
(continued):
Use: preventing cancer, premenstrual syndrome, infertility, impotence, chronic cystic mastitis, mammary dysplasia, peptic ulcers, Parkinson’s disease, tardive dyskinesia, neuromuscular disorders, and cataracts.

Warnings, Precautions, Side Effects: Absorption is increased when taken with a meal.

See drug interactions section.

The following pages list potential drug-herb or supplement interactions that should be considered when using herbs or supplements with prescription or over-the-counter medications. The lists of drugs may not list all medications in a class. You should consult your physician if you have questions about specific medications that may have interactions listed.

Drug Interactions:

Description: Alfalfa (Medicago sativa)

Problems: Warfarin (Coumadin): Excessive use may decrease the anticoagulant (blood thinning effects) of warfarin.

Oral Contraceptives or Hormone Therapy: Excessive doses of alfalfa may interfere with hormone therapy.

Chlorpromazine: Excessive doses of alfalfa may increase the risk of drug-induced photosensitivity.
### Drug Interactions (continued):

#### Description:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Problems:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aloe (Aloe barbadensis):</strong></td>
<td><strong>Antiarrhythmic drugs (Drugs for irregular heart beat):</strong> Overuse of aloe can increase risk of drug toxicity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Digoxin (Lanoxin):</strong> Overuse of aloe can increase risk of digoxin toxicity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Diuretics (Chorthalidone, Furosemide, Hydrochlorothiazide, Metolazone):</strong> Overuse may compound potassium loss by diuretic and contribute to confusion, weakness, and irregular heartbeat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bisacodyl (Dulcolax):</strong> Can exacerbate laxative effect, leading to potassium loss and contribute to confusion, weakness, or irregular heartbeat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bitter melon or Bitter Gourd (Momordica charantia):</strong></td>
<td><strong>Diabetes Therapy:</strong> May lower blood sugar and alter blood glucose control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Insulin:</strong> Insulin dosage adjustments can be necessary due to blood glucose lowering effects of bitter melon.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Drug Interactions (continued):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carnitine</strong> <em>(Levocarnitine, l-carnitine)</em>:</td>
<td><strong>Warfarin (Coumadin):</strong> The anticoagulant (blood thinning) effects may enhance the effects of warfarin, increasing the risk of bleeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cascara sagrada</strong> <em>(Rhamnus pershianus)</em>:</td>
<td><strong>Digoxin (Lanoxin):</strong> Overuse of Cascara sangrada can increase risk of digoxin toxicity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Chamomile, German** *(Matricaria recutita)*: | **Warfarin (Coumadin):** The anticoagulant (blood thinning) effects may enhance the effects of warfarin, increasing the risk of bleeding.  
**Central nervous system (CNS) depressants [alcohol, benzodiazepines, barbiturates, antihistamines (including over the counters), and other herbs that produce CNS depression]:** Chamomile may produce additive effects, increasing the drowsiness and fatigue side effect of the medication. |
<p>| <strong>Diuretics</strong> <em>(Chorthalidone, Furosemide, Hydrochlorothiazide, Metolazone)</em>: | May cause potassium loss and contribute to confusion, weakness, and irregular heartbeat. |
| <strong>Bisacodyl (Dulcolax):</strong> | Can exacerbate laxative effect, leading to potassium loss and contribute to confusion, weakness, or irregular heartbeat. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug Interactions (continued):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
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</table>

**Chromium:**

- **Insulin:** May lower blood sugar and alter blood glucose control.
- **Niacin (Vitamin B₃):** May enhance chromium’s effect on lowering blood glucose.
- **Vitamin C:** May increase chromium absorption.
- **Zinc:** May decrease chromium absorption.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chrondroitin:</th>
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</table>

- **Hyaluronic acid:** Use together can cause increased effects of hyaluronic acid during cataract surgery.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CoEnzyme Q-10 (Co-Q10):</th>
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</thead>
</table>

- **Diabetes Therapy:** Drugs that are taken by mouth to control diabetes can reduce levels and effects of CoEnzyme Q-10.

- **HMG-CoA Reductase Inhibitors**
  - [cervastatin (Baycol), atorvastatin (Lipitor), lovastatin (Mevacor), pravastatin (Pravachol), ans simvastatin (Zocor)]: HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors can reduce levels and effects of CoEnzyme Q-10.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Problems</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CoEnzyme Q-10 (Co-Q10)</td>
<td><strong>Problems:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Continued):</td>
<td>Warfarin (Coumadin): The anticoagulant (blood thinning) effects of warfarin may be decreased, reducing the effectiveness of warfarin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dandelion entire plant (<em>Taracum officiale</em>)</td>
<td>Digoxin: May lead to loss of potassium depletion and cause digoxin toxicity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Diuretics (Chorthalidone, Furosemide, Hydrochlorothiazide, Metolazone):</strong> May cause potassium loss and contribute to confusion, weakness, and irregular heartbeat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Diabetes Therapy:</strong> May lower blood sugar and alter blood glucose control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Lithium (Eskalith):</strong> Overuse theoretically can cause sodium loss and possibly lithium toxicity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echinacea (Echinacea purpurea)</td>
<td><strong>Immunosuppressant medications</strong> [Cyclosporine (Neoral, Sandimmune), Corticosteroids (Prednisone, Prednisolone): Immunostimulant effects of Echinacea may counteract therapeutic effects of these medications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Anabolic steroids, amiodarone (Cordarone), methotrexate, ketoconazole (Nizoral):</strong> Do not take with these medications known to be potentially toxic to the liver.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drug Interactions (continued):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description:</th>
<th>Problems:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feverfew <em>(Tanacetum perthanium)</em>:</td>
<td><strong>Anticoagulants [Warfarin (Coumadin)]:</strong> The anticoagulant (blood thinning) effects may enhance the effects of warfarin, increasing the risk of bleeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Antiplatelet drugs [Aspirin, Ticlopidine (Ticlid), clopidogrel (Plavix)]:</strong> Feverfew may enhance these drugs effects and increase the risk of bleeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Non-steroidal antiinflammatory agents (aspirin or ibuprofen):</strong> May reduce the effectiveness of this herb.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Garlic *(Allium sativum)*: | **Antiplatelet drugs [Aspirin, Ticlopidine (Ticlid), clopidogrel (Plavix)]:** Garlic may enhance these drugs effects and increase the risk of bleeding. |
|                          | **Anticoagulants [Warfarin (Coumadin)]:** The anticoagulant (blood thinning) effects may enhance the effects of warfarin, increasing the risk of bleeding. |
|                          | **Diabetes Therapy:** May lower blood sugar and alter blood glucose control. |
|                          | **Insulin:** Insulin dosage adjustments can be necessary due to blood glucose lowering effects of garlic. |
Drug Interactions (continued):

Description:
Ginger 
(Zingiber officinale):

Problems:
Antiplatelet drugs [Aspirin, Ticlopidine (Ticlid), clopidogrel (Plavix)]: Ginger may enhance these drugs effects and increase the risk of bleeding.

Anticoagulants [Warfarin (Coumadin)]: The anticoagulant (blood thinning) effects may enhance the effects of warfarin, increasing the risk of bleeding.

Blood Pressure Therapy: May interfere with blood pressure drug therapy by increasing or lowering blood pressure.

Diabetes Therapy: May lower blood sugar and alter blood glucose control.

Ginkgo leaf extract 
(Ginkgo biloba):

Antiplatelet drugs [Aspirin, Ticlopidine (Ticlid), clopidogrel (Plavix)]: Ginkgo may enhance these drugs effects and increase the risk of bleeding.

Anticoagulants [Warfarin (Coumadin)]: The anticoagulant (blood thinning) effects may enhance the effects of warfarin, increasing the risk of bleeding.
Drug Interactions (continued):

Description:  

Ginkgo leaf extract  
\textit{(Ginkgo biloba) (continued):}  

Problems:  

Monoamine oxidase inhibitors  
[Phenelzine (Nardil), tranylcypromine (Parnate)]: Ginkgo may potentiate these drugs’ effects.

Selective Serotonin reuptake inhibitors [Paroxetine (Paxil), Sertraline (Zoloft), Fluoxetine (Prozac), Fluvoxamine (Fluvox), Citalopram (Celexa)]: Ginkgo may potentiate these drugs’ effects. Ginkgo extract can reverse fluoxetine and sertraline – induced sexual dysfunction.

Ginseng, panax  
\textit{(Panax ginseng):}  

Digoxin: May aggravate drug’s side effect of swollen and tender breasts.

Calcium Channel Blockers  
[Amlodipine (Norvasc), diltiazem (Cardizem, Dilacor, Tiamate), felodipine (Plendil), isradipine (Dynacirc), nicardipine (Cardene), nifedipine (Adalat, Procardia), nisoldipine (Sular), verapamil (Calan, Isoptin)]: May aggravate drug’s side effects of swollen and tender breasts.
Drug Interactions (continued):

Description:
Ginseng, panax
(Panax ginseng)
(continued):

Problems:
Amitriptyline (Elavil), chlor-diazepoxide (Librium), chlor-promazine (Thorazine), clomipramine (Anafranil), lithium carbonate (Eskalith, Lithobid, Lithonate, Lithotabs), phenelzine (Nardil), tranylcypromine (Parnate): May counteract the drug’s effects.

Anticoagulants [Warfarin (Coumadin)]: May increase the anticoagulant (blood thinning) effects of Warfarin, and risk of bleeding.

Antiplatelet drugs [Aspirin, Ticlopidine (Ticlid), clopidogrel (Plavix)]: Ginseng may enhance these drugs effects and increase the risk of bleeding.

Diabetes Therapy: May lower blood sugar and alter blood glucose control.

Hormone Therapy: Ginseng may interfere with steroid and hormone drugs.

Insulin: Insulin dosage adjustments can be necessary due to blood glucose lowering effects.

Caffeine (Tea, Coffee, Colas, etc.) and stimulant drugs: Ginseng, may potentiate stimulant effects of these drugs.
Drug Interactions (continued):

Description:

Ginseng, Siberian
(Eleutherococcus senticosus):

Problems:

Alcohol: Avoid taking together.

Antiplatelet drugs [Aspirin, Ticlopidine (Ticlid), clopidogrel (Plavix)]: Ginseng may enhance these drugs effects and increase the risk of bleeding.

Anticoagulants [Warfarin (Coumadin)]: The anticoagulant (blood thinning) effects may enhance the effects of warfarin, increasing the risk of bleeding.

Diabetes Therapy: May lower blood sugar and alter blood glucose control.

Insulin: Insulin dosage adjustments can be necessary due to blood glucose lowering effects.

Antipsychotic drugs: Avoid using together.

Hormones: Avoid using together.

Barbiturates: Use with barbiturate may cause additive effects and side effects.

Sedative drugs: Use with sedative drugs may cause additive effects and side effects.
### Drug Interactions (continued):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goldenseal</strong> <em>(Hydrastis canadensis):</em></td>
<td><strong>Heparin:</strong> The anticoagulant (blood thinning) activity of heparin, may be opposed by berberine, which is a component in Goldenseal root.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grape seed</strong> <em>(Vitis vinefera):</em></td>
<td><strong>Warfarin (Coumadin):</strong> The anticoagulant (blood thinning) effects may enhance the effects of warfarin, increasing the risk of bleeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guarana</strong> <em>(Paullinia cupana):</em></td>
<td><strong>Caffeine (Caffedrine, NoDoz, Vivarin):</strong> Avoid use together as both have very high amounts of caffeine. <strong>Adenosine (Adenocard):</strong> Should be avoided 12 hours before the use of adenosine because it can inhibit the cardiac effects of adenosine. <strong>Barbiturates (Phenobarbital):</strong> Can decrease effects of guarana. <strong>Benzodiazepines</strong> <em>(alprazolam (Xanax), chlordiazepoxide (Librium), diazepam (Valium), clonazepam (klonopin), flurazepam (Dalmane), Lorazepam (Ativan), Midazolam (Versed), Oxazepam (Serax), temazepam (Restopril), triazolam (Halcion)):</em>* Guarana can reduce sedative effects of the benzodiazepines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drug Interactions (continued):

Description:
Guarana
(Paullinia cupana)
(continued):

Problems:

Beta-adrenergic agonists
[albuterol (Proventil, Ventolin, Volmax), metaproteranol
(Alupent), terbutaline (Bricanyl, Brethine), isoproterenol (Isuprel, Norisodrine)]: Guarana might
increase heart effects of these drugs.

Beta-blockers [propranolol
(Inderal), metoprolol
(Lopressor)]: Might increase
blood pressure and reduce effective.

Cimetidine (Tagamet):
Cimetidine can increase effects
of guarana.

Clozapine (Clozaril): Use to-
together can cause exacerbate
psychotic symptoms. Guarana may
also increase side effects and
toxicity of clozapine.

Central Nervous System (CNS)
Depressants: Can increase toxic
effects guarana.

Diabetes Therapy: May raise
blood sugar and alter blood
glucose control.

Dipyridamole (Persantine): Will
interfere with dipyridamole test
for blood flow in the heart.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description:</th>
<th>Problems:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guarana</strong> <em>(Paullinia cupana)</em></td>
<td><strong>Disulfiram</strong>: Can increase effects of guarana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(continued):</td>
<td><strong>Ephedrine</strong>: Use with guarana can increase agitation, tremors and insomnia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Iron</strong>: Avoid taking at the same time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Monoamine oxidase inhibitors</strong> [Phenelzine (Nardil), tranylcypromine (Parnate)]: When taken together can cause severe high blood pressure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Oral contraceptives</strong>: Can increase effects and side effects of guarana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Phenylpropanolamine</strong>: Use together can increase blood pressure and agitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Phenytoin (Dilantin)</strong>: Phenytoin can enhance the breakdown and reduce effects of guarana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Quinolones [Ciprofloxacin (Cipro) and grepafloxacin (Raxar)]</strong>: Can increase effects and side effects of guarana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Riluzole (Rilutek)</strong>: Avoid taking together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guarana</td>
<td>Theophylline [ Theodur, Slo-Bid]: Guarana can increase theophylline’s levels, effects, and side effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verapamil (Calan, Isoptin, Verelan, Covera): Can increase guarana effects and risk of side effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zinc: Avoid taking guarana one hour before or two hours after.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawthorn</td>
<td>Digoxin (Lanoxin): Use together might increase digoxin toxicity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Crataegus species):</td>
<td>Coronary Vasodilators (Theophylline, caffeine, papaverine, sodium nitrate, adenosine, and epinephrine): Might cause additive dilation of blood vessels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cardiovascular drugs for heart failure, high blood pressure, angina, and arrhythmias: Hawthorn may interfere with therapy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CNS depressants: Hawthorn may have additive depressant effects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Drug Interactions (continued):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hops</strong> <em>(Humulus lupulus):</em></td>
<td>Central nervous system (CNS) depressants [alcohol, benzodiazepines, barbiturates, antihistamines (including over-the-counters), and other herbs that produce CNS depression]: Hops may produce enhanced effects, increasing the drowsiness and fatigue side effect of the medication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kava-kava</strong> <em>(Piper methysticum):</em></td>
<td>Amitripyline (Elavil), chlordiazepoxide (Librium), chlorpromazine (Thorazine), clomipramine (Anafranil), lithium carbonate (Eskalith, Lithobid, Lithionate, Lithotabs), phenelzine (Nardil), tranylcypromine (Parnate): Can exacerbate drug’s effects on the central nervous system, causing drowsiness and slowed breathing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central nervous system (CNS) depressants [alcohol, benzodiazepines, barbiturates, antihistamines (including over-the-counters), and other herbs that produce CNS depression]: Kava-kava may produce enhanced effects, increasing the drowsiness and fatigue side effect of the medication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drug Interactions (continued):

Description:
Licorice
(\textit{Glycyrrhiza glabra}):  

Problems:

\textbf{Blood pressure medications:} Licorice may increase blood pressure counteracting the effects of blood pressure medications.

\textbf{Corticosteroids:} Licorice may increase the duration of activity of these drugs.

\textbf{Diabetes Therapy:} Licorice may interfere with glucose control.

\textbf{Digoxin:} May lead to loss of potassium increase risk of digoxin toxicity.

\textbf{Diuretics (Chorthalidone, Furosemide, Hydrochlorothiazide, Metolazone):} Overuse may compound potassium loss by diuretic and contribute to confusion, weakness, and irregular heartbeat. Licorice may also reduce medication effectiveness.

\textbf{Hormones:} Licorice may interfere with estrogen and anti-estrogen therapy.
Drug Interactions (continued):

Description:
Ma huang
(*Ephedra sinica*):

Problems:
Amitriptyline (Elavil), chlor-
diazepoxide (Librium), chlor-
promazine (Thorazine),
clomipramine (Anafranil),
lithium carbonate (Eskalith,
Lithobid, Lithonate,
Lithotabs), phenelzine
(Nardil), translycypromine
(*Parnate*): Can enhance drug’s
toxic effects.

Caffeine (*Caffedrine, NoDoz,
Vivarin*): Can exacerbate toxic
effects of caffeine.

Diabetes Therapy: May raise
blood sugar and alter blood
glucose control.

Theophylline (*Theo-Dur, Slo-
Bid, Theolair, Slophyllin*): Can
exacerbate rapid heart rate,
anxiety and high blood pressure.

Melatonin:  

Immunosuppressant medications
(*Cyclosporine (Neoral,
Sandimmune), Corticosteroids
(*Prednisone, Prednisolone*)):  
Immunostimulant effects of
melatonin may effect the therapeu-
tic effects of these medications.

Central nervous system (CNS)
depressants [*alcohol, benzodia-
epines, barbiturates, antihista-
mines (including over the
counters), and other herbs that
produce CNS depression*]:
## Drug Interactions (continued):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description:</th>
<th>Problems:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melatonin:</td>
<td>Melatonin may produce enhanced effects, increasing the drowsiness and fatigue side effect of the medication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Verapamil (Calan, Isoptin, Verelan, Covera):** Can increase the elimination of melatonin from the body.

**Nettle, Stinging Leaves (Urtica dioica):**

**Anticoagulants [Warfarin (Coumadin)]:** The anticoagulant (blood thinning) effects of warfarin may be decreased due to the vitamin K content of nettle.

**Diabetes Therapy:** May alter blood glucose control in diabetes.

**Blood Pressure medications:** Excessive amounts of nettle may effect medications to control high and low blood pressure.

**Central nervous system (CNS) depressants [alcohol, benzodiazepines, antihistamines (including over the counters), and other herbs that produce CNS depression]:** May produce enhanced effects, increasing the drowsiness and fatigue side effect of the medication.
Drug Interactions (continued):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Niacin (Vitamin B₃)          | Problems:
<p>|                              | <strong>Diabetes Therapy:</strong> May lower blood sugar and alter blood glucose control. |
|                              | <strong>Carbamazepine (Tegretol):</strong> Can decrease elimination of carbamazepine and increase risk of toxicity. |
|                              | <strong>HMG-CoA Reductase Inhibitors</strong> [cervastatin (Baycol), atorvastatin (Lipitor), lovastatin (Mevacor), pravastatin (Pravachol), ans simvastatin (Zocor)]: Use together can increase risk of myopathy (muscle damage). |
|                              | <strong>Bile Acid Sequesterants</strong> [cholestryramine (Questran) and colestipol (Colestid)]: Can reduce niacin absorption. |
|                              | <strong>Nicotine, transdermal</strong> (Nicoderm, Nictotrol, Habitrol): Can increase the risk of flushing and dizziness with niacin. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug Interactions (continued):</th>
<th>Problems:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parsley Leaf, Root</strong> <em>(Carum petroselenium)</em>:</td>
<td><strong>Anticoagulants [Warfarin (Coumadin)]:</strong> The anticoagulant (blood thinning) effects of Warfarin may be decreased due to the Vitamin K content of parsley.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passion flower</strong> <em>(Passiflora incarnata)</em>:</td>
<td><strong>Central nervous system (CNS) depressants [alcohol, benzodiazepines, antihistamines (including over the counters), and other herbs that produce CNS depression]:</strong> May produce enhanced effects, increasing the drowsiness and fatigue side effect of the medication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psyllium</strong> <em>(Plantago)</em>:</td>
<td><strong>Monoamine oxidase inhibitors [Phenelzine (Nardil), tranylcypromine (Parnate)]:</strong> Passion flower may potentiate these drugs’ effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drugs taken by mouth:</strong> Take drugs by mouth one hour before or four hours after Psyllium to avoid decreased or delayed absorption.</td>
<td><strong>Digoxin (lantoxin):</strong> Reduce absorption and therefore effect of digoxin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Drug Interactions (continued):

**Description:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Problems:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scopolia</strong> <em>(Scopolia carniolica):</em></td>
<td>Central nervous system (CNS) depressants [alcohol, benzodiazepines, antihistamines (including over the counters), and other herbs that produce CNS depression]: May produce enhanced effects, increasing the drowsiness and fatigue side effect of the medication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seaweed-Kelp</strong> <em>(Fucus and other species):</em></td>
<td>Anticoagulants [Warfarin (Coumadin)]: The anticoagulant (blood thinning) effects may enhance the effects of warfarin, increasing the risk of bleeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senna</strong> <em>(Cassia senna, Senna alexandrina):</em></td>
<td>Antiplatelet drugs [Aspirin, Ticlopidine (Ticlid), clopidogrel (Plavix)]: Seaweed may enhance these drugs effects and increase the risk of bleeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Digoxin (Lanoxin):</strong></td>
<td>Overuse can increase risk of digoxin toxicity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diuretics (Chorthalidone, Furosemide, Hydrochlorothiazide, Metolazone):</strong></td>
<td>May cause potassium loss and contribute to confusion, weakness, and irregular heartbeat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Drug Interactions (continued):

#### Problems:

- **Bisacodyl (Dulcolax):** Can exacerbate laxative effect, leading to potassium loss and contribute to confusion, weakness, or irregular heartbeat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description:</th>
<th>Antidepressants: Use together may increase actions and side effects of medications.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senna (Cassia senna, Senna alexandrina) (continued):</td>
<td><strong>Barbiturates (Phenobarbital):</strong> May increase sleep time with these drugs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John’s Wort (Herpicum perforatum):</td>
<td><strong>Bromocriptine (Parlodel):</strong> Taking with St. John’s wort can cause serious high blood pressure reactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Central nervous system (CNS) stimulants [many cold and hayfever medications, decongestants, methylphenidate, dextedrine, diet pills, beta-agonists (found in many asthma inhalers), caffeine (teas, cola, coffee), theophylline]:</strong> Taking together may cause serious high blood pressure reactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Digoxin:</strong> May lead to loss of potassium and increase risk of digoxin toxicity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diuretics (Chorthalidone, Furosemide, Hydrochlorothiazide, Metolazone): May cause potassium loss and contribute to confusion, weakness, and irregular heartbeat.

Monoamine oxidase inhibitors [Phenelzine (Nardil), tranylcypromine (Parnate)]: May exacerbate drugs effects.

Narcotics: May increase sleep time of these drugs.

Photosensitizing drugs: May exacerbate drugs’ side effect of increased sensitivity to the sun.

Selective Seratonin-Reuptake Inhibitors [Paroxetine (Paxil), Sertraline (Zoloft), Fluoxetine (Prozac), Fluvoxamine (Fluvox), Citalopram (Celexa)]: Do not use together due to risk of serotonin syndrome with headache, dizziness, sweating and agitation, confusion, shivering, muscle spasms, shaking and coma.

Reserpine: Can counteract reserpine drug effects.
### Drug Interactions (continued):

#### Description:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uva ursi or bearberry (Arctostaphlyos uva-ursi)</th>
<th>Problems:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digoxin: May lead to loss of potassium depletion and cause digoxin toxicity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diuretics (Chorthalidone, Furosemide, Hydrochlorothiazide, Metolazone)</th>
<th>Problems:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May cause potassium loss and contribute to confusion, weakness, and irregular heartbeat.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valerian (Valeriana officinalis)</th>
<th>Problems:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central nervous system (CNS) depressants [alcohol, benzodiazepines, Barbiturates (Phenobarbital), antihistamines (including over the counters), and other herbs that produce CNS depression]: May produce enhanced effects, increasing the drowsiness and fatigue side effect of the medication.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vitamin E (alpha-tocopherol)</th>
<th>Problems:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warfarin (Coumadin): The effects of vitamin E on vitamin K production may enhance the anticoagulant (blood thinning) effects of warfarin, increasing the risk of bleeding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bile Acid Sequesterants [cholestyramine (Questran) and colestipol (Colestid)]:</th>
<th>Problems:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May reduce vitamin E absorption.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Drug Interactions (continued):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wintergreen <em>(Gaultheria procumbens)</em>:</td>
<td><strong>Aspirin (Bufferin):</strong> Contains salicylates, the active compound in aspirin, and could cause toxicity. <strong>Warfarin (Coumadin):</strong> Could increase risk of bleeding due to systemic absorption of salicylates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow dock <em>(Rumex crispus)</em>:</td>
<td><strong>Digoxin:</strong> May lead to loss of potassium and increase risk of digoxin toxicity. <strong>Bisacodyl (Dulcolax):</strong> Can exacerbate laxative effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yohimbine <em>(Pausinystalia yohimbine)</em>:</td>
<td><strong>Diuretics (Chorthalidone, Furosemide, Hydrochlorothiazide, Metolazone):</strong> May counteract drugs effect. <strong>Spironolactone:</strong> May counteract drug’s effects. <strong>Calcium Channel Blockers [Amlodipine (Norvasc), diltiazem (Cardizem, Dilacor, Tiamate), felodipine (Plendil), isradipine (Dynacirc), nicardipine (Cardene), nifedipine (Adalat, Procardia), nisoldipine (Sular), verapamil (Calan, Isoptin)]:</strong> May counteract drugs effects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drug Interactions (continued):

Description:

Yohimbine
(*Pausinystalia yohimbine*)
(continued):

Problems:

**Blood Pressure Medications:**
May counteract the drug’s effects.

Amitriptyline (Elavil), chlor-
diazepoxide (Librium), chlor-
promazine (Thorazine),
clomipramine (Anafranil),
lithium carbonate (Eskalith,
Lithobid, Lithonate, Lithotabs),
phenelzine (Nardil), tranylcypromine (Parnate): These
drugs can increase toxicity of the
herb (if taken at the same time).
Buyer Beware. . .
Before starting a dietary supplement or herb you should check with your medical doctor. It is especially important for people who are:

Ø Pregnant or breast feeding
Ø Chronically ill
Ø Elderly or under 18 years of age
Ø Taking prescription or over-the-counter medications.

General Safety Guidelines:
When you are asked “What medications are you taking?” you should always inform your physician, pharmacist, nurse or hospital of any herbs or supplements you are or have recently used.
Ø Do not take any herbs on a daily basis for a prolonged period of time.
Ø Do not take large quantities of any one herbal preparation.
Ø Do not take any herbs or supplements that may be harmful. (See page 1.)
Ø Buy only preparations when plants and their quantities are listed on the package (no guarantee of safety).
Ø Look for ingredients in products with U.S.P. notation (U. S. Pharmacopeia).
Ø Some herbal products may interfere with anesthesia and should be stopped 2 to 3 weeks prior to surgery to ensure product is cleared from your body.

In addition to your physician, other health professionals, such as Registered Dietitians/Nutritionists and Registered Pharmacists may be a useful source of information.

Nutrition Health Line: (518) 926 – 2610
Pharmacy: (518) 926 – 2500 or (518) 926 – 2530
Report adverse reactions to FDA MedWatch: 1-800-FDA-1088

Poison Control Centers: 1. New York City Poison Control Center: (212) 340-4494
Educational Resources: The following listed resources represent a wide range of opinions and perspectives. This list does not represent an endorsement. Several sources should be consulted before drawing conclusions on the safety and effectiveness of particular herb or supplement.

Organizations & Web sites:

American Botanical Council, PO Box 144345, Austin, TX 78714; 512-926-4900; http://www2.outer.net/herbalgram/herbalgram.html
American Herbal Pharmacopoeia, PO Box 5159, Santa Cruz, CA 95063; 8130461-6317; www.herbal-ahp.org
United States Pharmacopeia, 12601 Twinbrook Pkwy., Rockville, MD 20852; 301-881-0666; www.usp.org
Federal Trade Commission; www.ftc.gov

Books:
The Review of Natural Products [formerly The Lawrence Review]. St. Louis, MO.: Facts & Comparisons; updated monographs on natural products.