

Study up before adding herbal supplements to your regimen

By Edie Fleitman

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Even as companies spend billions of dollars on modern pharmaceutical research, some people opt for herbal supplements to treat or prevent health problems.

There are varying opinions on using herbs for medical purposes. Some healthcare professionals say herbs are an important component of maintaining health and well-being.

Others believe the supplements simply exhaust people's budgets, which could be better directed toward traditional options.

Regardless of where your medical advice comes from, many people believe these natural treatments can have major effects, depending on your diet and prescription intake.

It's important to know how popular herbs are used and their limitations to determine whether they could fit into your health regimen.

GINGKO BILOBA

Made from one of the world's oldest trees, ginkgo biloba is commonly used as a memory aid. Adults who have trouble occasionally

recalling information could see benefits, especially as there is little chance of negative interactions with other supplements.

However, older adults who are developing symptoms of dementia won't curb the condition simply by taking a supplement. Anybody already taking blood thinners should be careful, because ginkgo's reaction with anticoagulants can cause extreme bleeding.

KAVA

A member of the pepper family, kava is commonly mixed with cold water to drink. This South Pacific root received a large amount of press several years ago for its relaxation benefits, but its negatives far outweigh any positives.

Research shows kava can cause severe toxification of the liver, which can completely shut down the organ.

Some people, especially those with an existing pepper-related allergy, have experienced allergic reac-

tions, such as hives, rashes and irritated eyes.

TURMERIC

Incorporating herbal supplements into your life can be as easy as looking through the spice rack.

Originally from East India, turmeric is found in many curry powders and has powerful anti-inflammatory properties. It also has been found to curb medical issues such as prostate cancer, melanoma and psoriasis.

Adults with gallstones shouldn't take turmeric

supplements, but they are safe for most people to incorporate into their diet.

Besides, most Indian food tastes wonderful — I've even begun to sprinkle some turmeric on my egg salad to brighten its flavor.

There are plenty of other herbal supplements that adults take for various ailments. It's always important to consult a trusted health professional before incorporating them into a health plan.



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