

Taking Herbal Medications before Surgery

The American Society of Anaesthesiologists (ASA) is cautioning those who use **herbal medications** to stop taking these “natural” products **1 week prior** to having a surgery.

Recent findings disclose that seven out of 10 herbal medicine users never tell their physicians about the herbal products they are taking. Most believe that since the products are “natural” they must be safe. Just because a medicine is called “natural” or “herbal” does not mean it is harmless or completely safe. Many of these products are quite potent and can be dangerous, especially if the patient’s anaesthetist or surgeon does not know that the patient is taking them.

A number of anaesthetists have reported significant changes in heart rate or blood pressure in some patients who have been taking herbal medications.

These herbal products include:

Baikal skullcap root (*Scutellaria baicalensis*) Herb or dietary supplement
 Bilberry fruit (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) Ginkgo leaves (*Ginkgo biloba*)
 Black currant seed oil (*Ribes nigrum*) Ginseng root (*Panax ginseng*)
 Bladderwrack (*Fucus vesiculosus*) Green tea (*Camellia sinensis*)
 Borage seed oil (*Borago officinalis*) Hawthorn leaf and flower (*Crataegus oxyacantha*, *Crataegus monogyna*)
 Bromelain from pineapple fruit and stem (*Ananas comosus*) Horse chestnut bark (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)
 Cayenne fruit (*Capsicum frutescens*) Huang qi (*Astragalus membranaceus*)
 Celery plant (*Apium graveolens*) Kava kava root (*Piper methysticum*)
 Chamomile, German flowers (*Matricaria recutita*) Licorice root (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*)
 Clove oil (*Syzygium aromaticum*) Omega 3
 Coleus roots (*Coleus forskohlii*) Papain from papaya leaves and unripe fruit (*Carica papaya*)
 Da huang, Chinese rhubarb root (*Rheum palmatum*) Pau d’arco bark (*Tabebuia avellaneda*)
 Dan shen root (*Salvia miltiorrhiza*) Reishi mushrooms (*Ganoderma lucidum*)
 Dandelion root (*Taraxacum officinale*) St. John’s Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)
 Dang shen (*Codonopsis pilosula*) Sha shen (*Glehnia littoralis*)
 Devil’s claw (*Harpagophytum procumbens*) Shinpi bark (*Fraxinus japonicus*)
 Dong quai root (*Angelica sinensis*, *Angelica acutiloba*) Sweet Birch oil (*Betula lenta*, *Betula pendula*)
 Erigeron plant (*Erigeron breviscapus*) Sweet clover plant (*Melilotus officinalis*, *Melilotus alba*)
 Evening primrose seed oil (*Oenothera biennis*) Tonka bean seeds (*Dipteryx odorata*, *Dipteryx oppositifolia*)
 Feverfew plant (*Tanacetum parthenium*) Turmeric root (*Curcuma longa*, *Curcuma aromatica*)
 Fish oil Vitamin E
 Garlic (*Allium sativum*) Wintergreen leaf oil (*Gaultheria procumbens*)
 Ginger rhizome (*Zingiber officinale*) Wood ear mushrooms (*Auricularia polytricha*)

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