



Botanicals: Safety, Toxicity & Interactions Table

Botanical	Main Safety Concerns / Toxicity	Avoid / Use Caution In	High-Risk Interactions
St. John’s wort (Hypericum)	Photosensitivity, agitation/insomnia; rare serotonin toxicity	Bipolar disorder, pregnancy (caution)	Strong CYP/P-gp inducer → ↓ effect of many meds (e.g., oral contraceptives, immunosuppressants, anticoagulants, some antiretrovirals); SSRI/SNRI/MAOI (serotonin syndrome risk)
Kava (Piper methysticum)	Hepatotoxicity risk, sedation	Liver disease, alcohol use disorder, pregnancy	CNS depressants (benzodiazepines, alcohol); hepatotoxic drugs
Valerian	Sedation, next-day drowsiness	Driving/operating machinery; pregnancy (caution)	Sedatives, alcohol
Ashwagandha	GI upset; may increase thyroid activity; rare liver injury reports	Hyperthyroidism, autoimmune thyroid disease (caution), pregnancy	Thyroid meds; sedatives (additive)
Rhodiola	Jitteriness/insomnia in some	Bipolar disorder (activation risk)	Stimulants; serotonergic meds (caution)
Ginseng (Panax)	Insomnia, headaches; possible BP/glucose effects	Arrhythmias, uncontrolled HTN	Warfarin (variable), hypoglycemics/insulin (additive), stimulants
Ginkgo	Bleeding risk; headache	Seizure disorders (rare risk with seeds/extract quality)	Anticoagulants/antiplatelets/NSAIDs (bleed risk); anticonvulsants (caution)
Garlic (high-dose)	Bleeding risk; GI upset	Pre-op	Warfarin/antiplatelets; some HIV meds (caution)
Turmeric/Curcumin (high-dose)	GI upset; may worsen gallbladder obstruction; possible kidney stone concern in high-oxalate stone formers (context-dependent)	Gallstones/obstruction; high oxalate stone history (caution with concentrated extracts)	Anticoagulants/antiplatelets (theoretical/additive); diabetes meds (additive)
Green tea extract	Liver injury risk (concentrated extracts), caffeine effects	Liver disease, anxiety/insomnia	Stimulants; anticoagulants (vit K in beverage form varies)
Berberine (barberry/goldenseal-derived)	GI upset; may lower glucose/BP	Pregnancy/breastfeeding; infants	Hypoglycemics, antihypertensives (additive); CYP interactions possible (varies)
Goldenseal	GI upset; CYP inhibition potential	Pregnancy/breastfeeding	CYP3A4/2D6 substrates (interaction potential)
Echinacea	Allergy (ragweed family); rare liver issues	Autoimmune disease (caution), transplant/immunosuppression	Immunosuppressants (theoretical opposition)
Elderberry	GI upset; immune stimulation	Autoimmune disease (caution)	Immunosuppressants (theoretical)
Licorice (whole root, glycyrrhizin)	Pseudoaldosteronism: HTN, hypokalemia, edema, arrhythmia risk	HTN, heart failure, CKD, pregnancy	Diuretics, digoxin, antihypertensives (electrolyte effects)
DGL licorice	Much safer re: BP/K+	Still caution if very sensitive	Fewer interactions; still space from meds if mucilage-heavy products used
Hawthorn	Dizziness, hypotension	Low BP	Additive with antihypertensives; cardiac glycosides (caution)
Milk thistle	Generally well tolerated; allergy	Ragweed allergy	Possible CYP interactions (usually mild)
Peppermint oil	Can worsen reflux; rare bronchospasm	GERD/hiatal hernia	Antacids (enteric coating dissolution timing)
Chamomile	Allergy (ragweed); sedation mild	Ragweed allergy	Anticoagulants (rare reports), sedatives (additive)
Ginger	Heartburn; bleeding risk at high dose	Pre-op	Anticoagulants/antiplatelets (additive)
Cranberry	GI upset; may affect stone risk in some; variable oxalate content by product	History of kidney stones (case-by-case)	Warfarin (case reports — monitor INR closely)
Uva ursi	Not for long-term: hepatotoxic/neurotoxicity potential with prolonged use	Pregnancy, breastfeeding, kidney disease	Diuretics (irritation risk); limit duration
Senna / stimulant laxatives	Cramping, electrolyte loss with chronic use	Chronic constipation without evaluation	Diuretics/digoxin (electrolytes), other laxatives
Aloe latex (not gel)	Strong laxative; electrolyte loss	Pregnancy; kidney disease	Diuretics/digoxin (electrolytes)
Yohimbe	High adverse event risk: anxiety, HTN, tachycardia	Anxiety, CVD, HTN	Stimulants, antihypertensives, antidepressants
Ephedra (ma huang)	Serious CV risk	Generally avoid	Stimulants; cardiac meds (high risk)
Black cohosh	Rare liver injury reports	Liver disease	Hepatotoxic meds (caution)