



Safe Use

How can you tell if a complementary product or service is one you should use? Follow these tips:

- Use credible sources for information:
 - The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) at <https://nccih.nih.gov>. At this Web site, search for, “How Safe Is This Product or Practice?”
 - PDR for Herbal Medicines. Look for this book at your local library or bookstore.
 - The Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Dietary supplements do not need approval before they are sold. Get more information on dietary supplement safety at www.fda.gov/food/dietarysupplements.
 - Your doctor, health care provider, or pharmacist. Find out if an herbal product, mega dose of a vitamin, etc. could be harmful with other medicines you take or conditions you have. Ask for a referral or list of practitioners who are trained and certified in the product or practice you want to explore.
 - Local and state medical boards, other health regulatory agencies or boards, and consumer affairs departments. Seek information on a provider’s credentials and about reported problems with products and services.
- Avoid products and services that claim to have “secret formulas” or “miraculous breakthroughs.” Just because a product is labeled “natural,” doesn’t mean it’s safe.

- Females who are planning to get pregnant, are pregnant, or who breast-feed should take vitamin supplements as advised. They should not use herbal products unless directed by a doctor. For a list of safe and unsafe herbs during pregnancy, search for, “Herbs and Pregnancy” at www.americanpregnancy.org.
- Give nutritional supplements to children as advised by their doctors.
- Follow the directions on the product label. Report unwanted side effects to your doctor or health care provider.

Consider costs, too. Health plans may not pay for complementary methods. Find out if a chiropractor (or other provider) accepts your health insurance. Ask, too, if you need a referral from your doctor for any or all of the costs to be covered.

Herbs

Herbs and other nutritional supplements can act in the same way as drugs. Check with your doctor before you take them.

Health problems using herbs can result from:

- The contents of a product. Some have harmful metals, organisms, etc.
- Taking too much.
- Interactions with medications.
- Effects on existing medical conditions.



*Check with your doctor
before using herbal
therapies.*