

# DO YOU TAKE HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS?

**BARRY R. FRANZEN, DDS**

*REAL SMILES FOR REAL PEOPLE*

The use of herbal supplements by the American Public as non-prescription therapeutic or preventive products has increased steadily in the past 2 decades. However, many of the consumers are unaware of the potential adverse effects of these substances and about 70% of them do not report the use of to their health care providers.

Being classified as dietary supplements, herbal products are not regulated by the FDA with the same scrutiny as conventional drugs. Dentists and dental hygienists need to take appropriate measures with regards to problems that may arise when treating patients taking herbal supplements.

Blood thinning herbal products can pose significant bleeding problems in dentistry even with simple minor surgical procedures. There can also be significant herb-drug interaction post operatively with prescriptions such as aspirin and ibuprofen. Cardiovascular inhibiting supplements (As-tralagus, Dong Quai, Sag) can induce orthostatic hypotension (low blood pressure). This can be especially significant for elderly patients who may be fasting prior to sedation procedures. Several supplements specific to Central Nervous System depression such as Kava and Volarian can interact with conventional doses of Valium and Chloral Hydrate causing excessive CNS depression. St. John's Wort is commonly used for mild depression and can act to cause restlessness, motor hyperactivity and even coma when used with opiod analgesics. Ephedra, used primarily for weight reduction, may also have adverse effects when used with drugs for sedation or general anesthetic.

If you are taking herbal supplements and will be undergoing dental intervention it is imperative you explain to your dentist what supplements are being taken. Many times all that is needed is a simple "holiday" or stoppage of the supplement for two weeks prior to the scheduled procedure.

If you have any questions regarding herbal supplements and your upcoming dental procedures Dr. Franzen and his staff are happy to provide you with any information you need.



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