

## ❖ VITAMIN DRUG PROFILES

There are possibly thousands of products that are on the market and it truly can be challenging to know what they all do and if it meets your needs. I am hoping to give a brief run-down of some of the amino-acids, herbs, vitamin and mineral supplements that are available and what they are commonly used for. I have tried to list food sources (if any) that they may be obtained from so that if you choose to gather them from natural sources than you can do so.

### ❖ AMINO ACIDS:

Amino acids are the building blocks of all proteins in our body. They are important to build muscles, hormones, cells, tissues, neurotransmitters and enzymes...so they are very important!

There are 20 amino acids that exist in the body and after water they form the second largest part of our human body. 9 of them are 'essential' to get from food because our body can't make it them and the rest are naturally produced within our body.

<u>Essential</u>	<u>Nonessential</u>
<u>Histidine</u>	<u>Alanine</u>
<u>Isoleucine</u>	<u>Arginine</u>
<u>Leucine</u>	<u>Asparagine</u>
<u>Lysine</u>	<u>Aspartic acid</u>
<u>Methionine</u>	<u>Cysteine</u>
<u>Phenylalanine</u>	<u>Glutamic acid</u>
<u>Threonine</u>	<u>Glutamine</u>
<u>Tryptophan</u>	<u>Glycine</u>
<u>Valine</u>	<u>Ornithine</u>
	<u>Proline</u>
	<u>Serine</u>
	<u>Tyrosine</u>

### What do the amino acids do?

They are all unique and have their own important role to do in our body. Of-course if you are eating a balanced diet then taking extra supplements won't be necessary. However, looking around the pharmacy and health food store aisles, you will see that supplements for individual amino acids are available, so if you feel the need to target one specific amino acid then you have that option to do so.

<u>AMINO ACID</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>	<u>FOOD SOURCES</u>
1. ALANINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Needed for sugar and acid metabolism to provide energy to our brain, central nervous system and muscle tissues</li> <li>✓ Needed to utilise B-group vitamins</li> <li>✓ Required for our immune system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Poultry</li> <li>✓ Eggs</li> <li>✓ Dairy</li> <li>✓ Fish</li> <li>✓ Avocado</li> </ul>
2. ARGININE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Enhances the immune system</li> <li>✓ Aids liver detoxification</li> <li>✓ Vital for muscle metabolism to increase performance and can reduce leg cramping</li> <li>✓ Aids in weight loss by increasing muscle mass and reduces body fat and assist in wound healing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Dairy products</li> <li>✓ Soybeans</li> <li>✓ Wheat</li> <li>✓ Peanuts, walnuts and almonds</li> <li>✓ Oats and wholegrains</li> </ul>
3. ASPARAGINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Reduces fatigue and improves liver functioning</li> <li>✓ It is required for nerve signals and function</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Soy</li> <li>✓ Wholegrains</li> <li>✓ Sunflower seeds</li> <li>✓ Beef and chicken</li> <li>✓ Asparagus</li> </ul>
4. ASPARTIC ACID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increases stamina, reduces fatigue and increases metabolism</li> <li>✓ Needed for our brain and nerve health</li> <li>✓ Necessary for our immune system to function well</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Sprouting seeds</li> <li>✓ Dairy</li> <li>✓ Beef</li> <li>✓ Sugar cane and molasses</li> </ul>
5. CYSTEINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Necessary for white blood cell activity</li> <li>✓ Required for antioxidants production and to protect the liver and brain from alcohol and drug toxicity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Oats</li> <li>✓ Sunflower seeds</li> <li>✓ Eggs</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Required for healthy skin function/structure and reduces ageing and healing</li> <li>✓ Assists in muscle building and burning fat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Brazil nuts</li> </ul>
6. GLUTAMIC ACID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Excitatory neurotransmitter that increases the firing of neurons</li> <li>✓ Can increase the metabolism of sugars and fats</li> <li>✓ Works to detox muscle cells and required to make Folic Acid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Almonds</li> <li>✓ Cheese</li> <li>✓ Wheat flour</li> </ul>
7. GLUTAMINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Is found in the muscles of the body so works to maintain and build muscles so excellent for body builders and dieters</li> <li>✓ Helps to maintain normal Blood glucose levels and increase the immune function</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Spinach</li> <li>✓ Parsley</li> <li>✓ Cabbage</li> <li>✓ Barley</li> </ul>
8. GLYCINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ This is vital for the production of bile acids to breakdown fats as well as for muscles to breakdown glucose into energy</li> <li>✓ Assists in tissue repair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Beans</li> <li>✓ Fish and Meat</li> <li>✓ Cheese</li> </ul>
9. HISTADINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ This is required to use Iron, Zinc, Manganese and Copper in our body and is also the precursor to histamine which is produced by our immune system in reaction to something 'foreign'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Fish (i.e. mackerel)</li> <li>✓ Eggs</li> <li>✓ Rice</li> <li>✓ Rye</li> <li>✓ Mushrooms and bananas</li> </ul>
10. ISOLEUCINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ This increases energy, stamina and assists in muscle recovery</li> <li>✓ It also controls pour blood sugar levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Top round beef</li> <li>✓ Pork</li> <li>✓ Shrimp</li> <li>✓ Cottage cheese</li> </ul>
11. LEUCINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Promotes muscle growth and the production of Growth Hormone; whilst burning fat! Excellent for body builders and people wanting to tone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Fish</li> <li>✓ Chicken</li> <li>✓ Beef and Eggs</li> </ul>
12. LYSINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Assists proper muscle growth and bone development in children by increasing calcium absorption and producing hormones.</li> <li>✓ Necessary for the production of Carnitine that is a nutrient required to breakdown fats into energy and can reduce cholesterol levels</li> <li>✓ Capacity to fight cold sores especially when taken with vitamin C</li> <li>✓ Regulates blood sugar levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Cheese</li> <li>✓ Eggs</li> <li>✓ Fish</li> <li>✓ Soy products</li> <li>✓ Potatoes</li> <li>✓ Red meat</li> <li>✓ Legumes (beans, peas and lentils)</li> </ul>
13. METHIONINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Sulphur containing AA that assists in the breakdown of fats and for growth</li> <li>✓ Powerful antioxidant that can detoxify the liver</li> <li>✓ Prevents nail and skin problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Eggs</li> <li>✓ Fish</li> <li>✓ Lentils and wholegrains</li> <li>✓ Garlic</li> <li>✓ Soybeans</li> </ul>
14. PHENYALANINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ This is required to produce adrenaline for energy, stamina, mental alertness, memory and focus</li> <li>✓ It also acts as an appetite suppressant and can increase the metabolism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Crab</li> <li>✓ Salmon and sardines</li> <li>✓ Liver</li> <li>✓ Almonds, peanuts</li> <li>✓ Soy products</li> </ul>
15. PROLINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ This is within Collagen so is vital for skin and tendon structure</li> <li>✓ It can also reduce arteriosclerosis to reduce the risk of heart disease</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Soybeans</li> <li>✓ Wheat germ</li> <li>✓ Cheese</li> </ul>
16. SERINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Vital for our immune system and our brain</li> <li>✓ It allows for the absorption of CREATINE to build and maintain muscles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Soy</li> <li>✓ Meat</li> <li>✓ Peanuts, almonds and walnuts</li> </ul>
17. THREONINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ This is within collagen, elastin and is vital for skin, tooth enamel and bone formation</li> <li>✓ It can assist in fat metabolism in the liver</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Beans</li> <li>✓ Lentils</li> <li>✓ Peanuts, Almonds, Sesame seeds and flaxseed</li> </ul>
18. TRYPTOPHAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Necessary by the brain to produce serotonin which is a Neurotransmitter that combat depression, insomnia and stabilise mood</li> <li>✓ Can reduce appetite and carbohydrate cravings; hence aid weight control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Brown rice</li> <li>✓ Cottage cheese</li> <li>✓ Meat</li> <li>✓ Peanuts</li> <li>✓ Soy protein</li> </ul>
19. TYROSINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Used to speed up metabolism as it is a precursor to adrenaline and acts as a stimulant to suppress appetite as well</li> <li>✓ Is a precursor to Dopamine; so it stabilises moods and mental function</li> <li>✓ Mild antioxidant and is needed for the formation of the hormone Thyroxine which is vital for our health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Almonds</li> <li>✓ Avocados</li> <li>✓ Bananas</li> <li>✓ Dairy products</li> </ul>
20. VALINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Prevents muscle breakdown</li> <li>✓ Appetite suppressant; so vital for a weight loss program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Kidney beans</li> <li>✓ Milk</li> <li>✓ Green leafy vegetables</li> </ul>

## ❖ VITAMINS, MINERALS AND HERBS

I believe there are common questions that we all ask about medicines that help us decide whether or not that we want to take them. There is a lot of information out there, but if you are like me then I like to have it put simply so I can make my decision quickly.

As a general rule, there are limited studies and data for the safety of natural health products in pregnancy and breast-feeding and if I have not read concrete evidence supporting its safety, then I recommend avoiding its use. Also check with your pharmacist or naturopath if you take any other medications, as the interactions mentioned are not an 'all-inclusive list'; it is important that you check before taking anything!

### ❖ ALOE VERA

#### What is it used for?

This is used topically for its healing, cooling and mild anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties as well as it being an excellent moisturiser and softener for burns, cuts, bites and acne.

It is also used orally to help the possible conditions; heal stomach disorders, ulcers, constipation, haemorrhoids and osteoarthritis.

#### When should I be careful?

- × You must separate all medications by 2 hours if taken orally as it may affect its absorption
- × It can affect blood glucose levels so it should be taken with care if diabetic
- × Should not be used if you have any serious kidney or inflammatory bowel condition

#### What are the common side effects?

- × Diarrhoea
- × Stomach cramps when taken orally

#### What natural food sources is it found in?

Aloe Vera Plant

#### What drug interactions might there be?

- × It must be separated by 2 hours from all medications if taken orally as it can act as a stimulant laxative and affect its absorption
- × Digoxin, Diabetic medication, Blood pressure medication and Warfarin; do not take whilst taking these unless on Dr's advice and monitoring
- × It can interact with other laxatives

#### Can I use if I am pregnant?

It should not be used orally if pregnant; topically appears safe to use for the shortest time possible

#### Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?

It should not be used orally if breastfeeding; topically appears safe to use after the last feed for the shortest time possible

#### Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?

Aloe Vera when taken orally can act as a stimulant laxative; so ideally you should not drink alcohol as this may cause dehydration if diarrhoea occurs. With topical use, if using for sunburn and burns then alcohol can also cause dehydration and delay healing; so consider water instead!

#### What other bits of information can you give me?

Try to obtain 100% pure sources of Aloe Vera. Try to take oral dose after eating to reduce any stomach upsets from occurring. If you have fluctuating blood sugar levels, monitor them frequently whilst taking this to reduce hypoglycaemia.

#### Recommended dosage:

TOPICALLY: Apply the gel three times daily

ORALLY: 100-200mg Aloe Vera daily

### ❖ ASTRAGALUS

#### What is it used for?

This is a traditional Chinese herb that is used to boost the immune system in colds, upper respiratory tract infections; it can help to protect the liver, increase stamina and endurance and supposedly has healing properties.

**When should I be careful?**

- × It should not be used if fever is present as it may be an indication that the infection is too far gone and you must see your doctor.
- × If you have high blood pressure or diabetes, you must take care as it may affect your readings. Check with your doctor
- × You should not take Astragalus if you take other medications to reduce your immune system

**What are the common side effects?**

There have been none noteworthy; if you do experience anything unusual stop taking it immediately and go to your doctor

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × It should not be used with immune reducing medications; check with your Dr or Pharmacist first before taking
- × It can interact with Lithium, blood pressure and diabetic medications; check with Dr or Pharmacist first
- × It must be separated by all medications by 2 hours
- × It may act as a diuretic, so be careful if you take other diuretic medications

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited evidence of its safety, so it is best avoided

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited evidence of its safety, so it is best avoided

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

You usually take this to boost your immune system when you are sick; so you should avoid alcohol as it will dehydrate you (and Astragalus is said to have diuretic properties) and delay your recovery. Instead try to increase your water to at least 6-8 glasses per day

**What other bits of information can you give me?**

It should not be used in children under 12 and if symptoms are not improving after 48 hours of taking; see your doctor

**Recommended dosage:**

The commonly utilised dosage range for Astragalus is equivalent to 3 to 6 g of dried root per day, as a decoction, tablet, capsule or fluid extract.

❖ **BEE PROPOLIS**

**What is it used for?**

This is obtained from beehives and can be used for topical skin conditions such as cold sores and exhibits antibacterial and anti-viral functions. It can also have some anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects.

**When should I be careful?**

- × It should not be used if there are any allergies to bee products.
- × Care is needed in asthmatics, as it may worsen or trigger symptoms

**What are the common side effects?**

It may irritate the skin if sensitive.

**What drug interactions might there be?**

Any major interactions are unknown at this stage

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data for its safety whilst pregnant; so should be avoided

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data for its safety whilst breast-feeding; so should be avoided

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

If using for a bacterial or viral infection, then consuming alcohol may delay recovery. Drink at least 6-8 glasses of water

**Recommended dosage:**

**For cold sores:** use the 3% Ointment five times per day for 5 days

## ❖ **BILBERRY**

### **What is it used for?**

This is a natural antioxidant that contains 15 flavonoid compounds is essential in keeping the walls of capillaries strong and flexible to help blood flow. It is typically used to protect the eyes and may strengthen collagen structures in the skin; therefore it is used for its anti-aging abilities, anti-inflammatory, to improve night vision/macular degeneration/cataracts, varicose veins and haemorrhoids.

### **When should I be careful?**

- × It has been found to interfere with the absorption of iron and people with diabetes need to use this with care.
- × It can thin the blood so care needs to be taken if taking anti-coagulation medication

### **What are the common side effects?**

- × It may reduce blood glucose levels so take care if diabetic

### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Anti-coagulation medication, it can increase bleeding
- × Diabetic medication; it can change the blood glucose levels and cause hypo or hyperglycaemia

### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

Although likely to be safe, there is insufficient evidence to support its use so it is best avoided

### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

Although likely to be safe, there is insufficient evidence to support its use so it is best avoided

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears safe to use

**Recommended dosage:** Standardised extract of 240-480mg per day in 2-3 divided doses

## ❖ **BLACK COHOSH**

### **What is it used for?**

This is an herb used to treat menopause by increasing the effects of oestrogen.

### **When should I be careful?**

- × It has been associated with causing liver damage so extreme care needs to be taken if you have had any history of liver disease or are experiencing any side effects. Regular blood tests will be required whilst taking.
- × It should not be used in any hormone based conditions such as ovarian, breast, uterine cancer, endometriosis or fibroids. If there is any history of such conditions in your family you must not take it until you have consulted your doctor

### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Stomach upset
- × Headache
- × Vaginal bleeding or spotting
- × May cause liver damage; watch for signs of jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes), changes in stool colour.

### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × It may interact with Statin cholesterol medications as the combination can increase liver damage
- × Oestrogen containing medications on prescription; should not be used together

### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It should not be taken during pregnancy at all

### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It should not be taken whilst breastfeeding at all

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

The combination can increase the risk of liver damage; so it is best to avoid it

**Recommended dosage:** 20- 80mg once to twice daily

## ❖ **BORON**

### **What is it used for?**

This is an element that is needed for healthy bones and muscle growth and is often used for osteoarthritis.

### **When should I be careful?**

- × It may increase oestrogen so care is required in hormone dependent conditions
- × Care is needed in kidney disease

### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Headaches
- × Vomiting
- × Diarrhoea

### **What natural food sources is it found in?**

It can be found in food sources such as; apples, carrots, grapes and dark green leafy vegetables.

### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Oestrogen

### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It can be used whilst pregnant; however in quantities less than 20mg per day.

### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It can be used whilst breast-feeding; however in quantities less than 20mg per day.

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears safe to use

## ❖ **CALENDULA**

### **What is it used for?**

This is an herb that contains a high amount of flavonoids so acts as an anti-inflammatory and antioxidant to soothe the skin and has antibacterial and antiviral properties. It can improve wound healing and is used topically for sun burn, eczema, dermatitis, cuts and on nappy rash in children.

### **When should I be careful?**

It should not be used on skin that appears to be highly infected or if a fever is present as it may require something stronger from doctors

### **What are the common side effects?**

- × If sensitive, it may cause a rash or irritation on the skin
- × It may cause drowsiness even though only used on the skin

### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Although only topically used here, in theory it can increase the drowsiness of all medications that cause drowsiness so the combination should be avoided

### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It is not considered safe to use whilst pregnant and some reports suggest it should not be used in couples trying to conceive

### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

Although likely to be safe, there is insufficient evidence to support its use so it is best avoided

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

Even though only used topically, there is a risk of drowsiness occurring so alcohol should be avoided

**Recommended dosage:** Apply to the skin three to four times a day

## ❖ CELERY

### What is it used for?

This can be used for its diuretic properties and is used to reduce blood pressure, minimise symptoms of gout, arthritis and fluid retention.

### When should I be careful?

- × It should not be used if you have any disorders of the kidney
- × Should not be used if also taking diuretics or blood pressure medication
- × Not to be used in children under 12 years old unless on doctor's supervision
- × It may increase the skin's sensitivity to the sun
- × You should regularly monitor your blood pressure

### What are the common side effects?

- × It may cause dizziness or drowsiness in some people

### What drug interactions might there be?

- × Can interact with diuretics and blood pressure medication and should not be used together
- × Blood thinning medications; it can increase bleeding
- × Thyroid medication; may affect how well they work check with your doctor first
- × Lithium
- × In theory, anti-inflammatories should be used with caution due to their taxing on the liver

### Can I use if I am pregnant?

It should not be used during pregnancy.

### Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?

It should be avoided during breast-feeding

### Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?

Since it acts as a diuretic, it should be avoided as it may cause dehydration and put strain on the kidneys

**Recommended dosage:** 1 to 3 grams three times daily

## ❖ CHASTE TREE (VITEX AGNUS-CASTUS )

### What is it used for?

This is a fruit derived product that works to regulate the menstrual cycle but can also assist in menopause symptoms.

### When should I be careful?

- × It should not be used in hormone-sensitive conditions such as ovarian, uterine, breast cancer, fibroids or endometriosis

### What are the common side effects?

- × Nausea, stomach upset
- × It may cause weight gain in some women if used long-term

### What drug interactions might there be?

- × Hormone based products

### Can I use if I am pregnant?

No

### Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?

No

### Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?

It appears ok to use, but may increase fluid retention and hot flashes in some women

**Recommended dosage:** 20-40mg per day

## ❖ CHONDROITIN

### What is it used for?

This is used mainly for the creation of cartilage; it can act as a cushion in the joints by attracting water to maintain to keep the joints moving freely. It can protect the joints from further degeneration by blocking the enzymes that can destroy it.

### When should I be careful?

- × However, it can thin the blood so care needs to be taken if you have any underlying conditions or are taking medication that can thin the blood.
- × It may worsen symptoms in some asthmatics; stop taking if this occurs
- × Take care in shellfish allergies

### What are the common side effects?

- × Stomach pain, nausea, diarrhoea or constipation
- × Possible hair loss

### What drug interactions might there be?

- × It can interact with Warfarin and increase the risk of bleeding

### Can I use if I am pregnant?

There is limited data in its safety whilst pregnant so it is best avoided

### Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?

There is limited data in its safety whilst breast-feeding so it is best avoided

### Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?

It appears safe to use

**Recommended dosage:** 200-400mg twice to three times a day

## ❖ CHROMIUM PICOLATE

### What is it used for?

This is involved in the metabolism of glucose for energy and consequently can produce a stable blood sugar levels. It can reduce sugar cravings; promote the loss of fat and an increase in lean muscle tissue so is wonderful for people that wish to lose weight and in diabetics to help maintain a stable system.

### When should I be careful?

- × Diabetes
- × Cholesterol changes

### What are the common side effects?

- × Headaches
- × Dizziness
- × Nausea.
- × It may affect the kidney and liver

### What natural food sources is it found in?

It can be found in food sources such as: brown rice, cheese, whole grains, chicken, mushrooms and potatoes.

### What drug interactions might there be?

- × Diabetic drugs
- × Cholesterol medications
- × Anti-inflammatories

### Can I use if I am pregnant?

There is limited data, so it is best avoided unless it is consumed in normal levels within foods

### Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?

There is limited data, so it is best avoided unless it is consumed in normal levels within foods

### Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?

It appears safe to use

**Recommended dosage:** 200-1000mcg daily

❖ **CLOVE OIL**

**What is it used for?**

This is a natural compound that is used mainly in toothaches over-the-counter because of its antiseptic and anti-parasitic properties.

**When should I be careful?**

- × Should not be used if there is an infection in the tooth; you must visit your dentist
- × Should not be used in children under 12
- × It contains the active ingredient Eugenol, which can increase bleeding so inform your dentist that you have used this product as it may affect the work they can do on the area

**What are the common side effects?**

- × It may cause damage and burning to the gums and tooth pulp
- × May cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain if used in high amounts or for a long periods of time

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × It can interact with blood thinning medication as this can have an additive effect with Eugenol

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It appears safe in the amounts found in food, but should not be used in the medicinal amounts

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It appears safe in the amounts found in food, but should not be used in the medicinal amounts

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

If you have a tooth ache or infection, you should avoid the consumption of alcohol

**Recommended dosage:** Apply a small amount on a cotton bud three times a day when required

❖ **COQ10**

**What is it used for?**

This is a powerful antioxidant that is essential for the production of energy in every cell of the body and can counteract muscle pain. It can assist in reducing blood pressure, it may prevent migraines and lower the risk of heart related condition as well as necessary for circulation and can be used to delay aging. The amount in your body declines as you get older and certain cholesterol lowering medication on prescription can reduce how much is in your system.

**When should I be careful?**

- × It can reduce blood pressure so take care if you already have this

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Stomach upset and reduced appetite
- × Nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea
- × Can cause skin allergies

**What natural food sources is it found in?**

You can obtain CoQ10 in certain foods such as; salmon, beef, spinach, liver, pork, chicken, sardines, soybeans, olive oil, parsley, avocado and unsalted peanuts.

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Blood pressure medication; your dose may need to be adjusted if it brings down your blood pressure
- × Warfarin; it can increase bleeding and side effects. Have your INR monitored frequently

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

Although likely to be safe, there is insufficient evidence to support its use so it is best avoided at this stage

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

Although likely to be safe, there is insufficient evidence to support its use so it is best avoided at this stage

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears ok to use, however it may reduce COQ10's antioxidant and general health benefits by indulging.

**Recommended dosage:** 100-150 mg per day

#### ❖ CRANBERRY

##### **What is it used for?**

This is used in preventing and treating urinary tract infections as it works to make the urine acidic which can prevent the bacteria from remaining in the urinary tract. It is also a strong anti-oxidant and is an excellent source of vitamin C hence it can boost the immune system.

##### **When should I be careful?**

- × It may increase the risk of kidney stones especially if you are predisposed to having them
- × It can increase the risk of bleeding
- × Contains Salicylic acid, so care is needed in anyone with allergies to this
- × Care is needed if you consume cranberry juice/drinks as they may be high in sugar and possibly upset the system more especially if you are diabetic or suffer from thrush

##### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Diarrhoea, abdominal pain and could cause kidney stones

##### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Care needs to be taken as it can interact with Warfarin and other blood thinning medication
- × It may reduce the effects of antacids so should be separated by at least 2 hours

##### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It appears safe in the amounts found in food, but there is limited data in medicinal amounts so it is best avoided. Also if you are suffering from UTI's whilst pregnant it is vital that you go to your doctor to get the appropriate medication to treat it to minimise any complications from occurring.

##### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It appears safe in the amounts found in food, but there is limited data in medicinal amounts so it is best avoided. If you are experiencing a UTI then go to your doctor as it may cause fever and dehydration and possibly affect your ability to feed.

##### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

Since using to prevent and treat UTI's it is best to avoid alcohol as it can cause dehydration and cause burning when urinating and delay the recovery from this infection. Try to drink as much water as possible.

**Recommended dosage:** up to 800mg per day

#### ❖ CREATINE

##### **What is it used for?**

This is a by-product of metabolism in the body however it is commonly used to increase strength and endurance therefore very popular in those going to the gym.

##### **When should I be careful?**

- × It may harm the liver or kidney function
- × It draws water into the muscles so may cause dehydration if you are not drinking sufficient water
- × Should not use if diabetic as it may affect blood glucose levels
- × Should not combine this with caffeine as it can cause arrhythmias

##### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Abdominal pain, nausea, diarrhoea and muscle cramping

##### **What natural food sources is it found in?**

It is found in fish and meat sources naturally.

##### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Do not use with diabetic medications as it can affect the blood glucose levels
- × Do not use with anti-inflammatory and diuretic medications as it may cause further damage to the kidneys

##### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data in its safety whilst pregnant so it is best avoided

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data in its safety whilst pregnant so it is best avoided

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

You should not drink alcohol as it can cause severe dehydration and affect the kidneys. You need to keep well hydrated

**Recommended dosage:** initially: 20grams daily for 5 days and then reduce to 2 or more grams per day

❖ **DONG QUAI**

**What is it used for?**

This is a plant root that may affect oestrogen levels, thereby treating PMS and menopausal symptoms

**When should I be careful?**

- × It may increase the risk of bleeding
- × It should not be used in hormone-sensitive conditions such as ovarian, uterine, breast cancer, fibroids or endometriosis
- × It can increase photosensitivity to the skin; so take care in the sun and use extra protection

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Photosensitivity

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Hormone based products
- × Anti-coagulants, Warfarin and anti-inflammatories

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

No

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

No

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears ok to use, but may increase fluid retention and hot flashes in some women

❖ **ECHINACEA**

**What is it used for?**

This is an herb that is used to boost the immune system to fight against viral or bacterial infections; typically used to prevent colds, flu and allergies.

**When should I be careful?**

- × Care needs to be taken with asthmatics as it may exacerbate symptoms if sensitive to it
- × It should not be used if allergic to daisies or marigolds
- × It should not be used in conditions related to the immune system such as Rheumatoid Arthritis

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Nausea, vomiting or stomach ache
- × Dry and sore throat, numb the tongue and unpleasant taste
- × Headache
- × Dizziness

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × It can increase the effects of caffeine and cause irritability and nervousness
- × Should not be used with medications that reduce the immune system

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data in its safety whilst pregnant so it is best avoided

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data in its safety whilst pregnant so it is best avoided

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It is best avoided, since Echinacea is used when you have a cold and flu and you need to be well hydrated or it may delay recovery.

**Recommended dosage:** 1 to 2 Grams of dried root once to three times a day

### ❖ **ELDERBERRY**

#### **What is it used for?**

This is an antioxidant that has been used to relieve chesty coughs and congestion as well as boosting the immune system if taken within 24 to 48 hours of onset of symptoms

#### **When should I be careful?**

- × Should not be taken with conditions relating to immune system such as rheumatoid arthritis

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Nausea, vomiting and possibly severe diarrhoea

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Immune suppressants

#### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data in its safety whilst pregnant so it is best avoided

#### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data in its safety whilst pregnant so it is best avoided

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It is best avoided, since Elderberry is used when you have a cold and flu and you need to be well hydrated or it may delay recovery

**Recommended dosage:** 15 mL four times a day for 3 to 5 days

### ❖ **FISH OIL**

#### **What is it used for?**

This is a source of omega 3 essential fatty acids that can be used for its anti-inflammatory properties, lubrication; reduce blood pressure and ability to reduce cholesterol and heart disease. It can also be used in asthma, ADHD, to increase bone density and menstrual pain.

#### **When should I be careful?**

- × They can thin the blood so care is needed if taking any medication that does this
- × If you are allergic to seafood, then it may cause a reaction
- × It can change blood glucose levels and blood pressure; so regular monitoring is required.

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Bad breath
- × Heartburn
- × Nausea
- × Loose stools; but all of these stomach effects can be reduced by freezing the fish oil and taking after food

#### **What natural food sources is it found in?**

It can naturally be found in salmon, mackerel, herring, tuna, anchovy, trout and sardines.

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Anticoagulants
- × Blood pressure medication
- × Diabetic medication
- × May mean that you can reduce anti-inflammatory medications as they have an additive effect

#### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It is safe to use in pregnancy in doses less than 3 G per day

### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It is safe to use whilst breastfeeding in doses less than 3 G per day taken straight after a feed.

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears ok to use

**Recommended dosage:** High TG's': 1-4 G daily, Rheumatoid Arthritis: 3.8G per day

### ❖ **FLAXSEED OIL**

#### **What is it used for?**

This is a nutty source of omega 3 essential fatty acids but it also has traces of magnesium, potassium and fibre, B vitamins, protein and zinc. It may reduce cholesterol and help to control blood glucose levels. If taken before food can reduce the appetite

#### **When should I be careful?**

- × Take care in diabetics as it may reduce the blood glucose levels and dosages may need to be adjusted
- × It can act like oestrogen so should not be used in hormone sensitive cancers such as ovarian cancer, endometriosis and fibroids.

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Nausea, diarrhoea and stomach ache

#### **What natural food sources is it found in?**

Flaxseed meal or flaxseed oil

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Diabetics medication; the blood glucose levels may be affected so the dose may need to change
- × Oestrogen; it can act like this hormone so may have an additive effect
- × Blood thinning medication, as the omega 3 acts to thin the blood

#### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It can act like oestrogen should not be taken in medicinal doses whilst pregnant

#### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It can act like oestrogen should not be taken in medicinal doses whilst breast-feeding

#### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears ok to use

**Recommended dosage:** Cholesterol: 40-50 G day

### ❖ **GARLIC**

#### **What is it used for?**

This has strong antioxidant properties; it can lower blood pressure, assist in digestion and is excellent at boosting the immune system. It can reduce the hardening of arteries and reduce the risk of colon rectal and stomach cancers

#### **When should I be careful?**

- × It can thin the blood so care needs to be taken with blood thinning medication.
- × Garlic can worsen symptoms in some asthmatics so care is needed.

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Bad breath, burning in mouth and stomach
- × Gas, nausea and vomiting
- × Body odour and diarrhoea

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Anticoagulants; have an additive effect of thinning the blood
- × May change the metabolism of certain medications; check with your pharmacist first
- × Reports suggest that it may reduce the effects of the pill and extra precautions are needed to be used

### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It is safe to use in pregnancy and breastfeeding in food amounts but not in medicinal amounts

### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It is safe to use in pregnancy and breastfeeding in food amounts but not in medicinal amounts

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears ok to use

**Recommended dosage:** 600-1200mg daily

### ❖ **GINGER**

#### **What is it used for?**

This is used to treat nausea and can be an anti-inflammatory agent; so effective in osteoarthritis, menstrual cramps and pain.

#### **When should I be careful?**

- × It can increase the risk of bleeding
- × It can affect blood glucose levels, so care is needed in diabetics as their insulin and glucose needs may change

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Mild heartburn or diarrhoea; but appears to be well tolerated

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Anti-coagulants such as Warfarin and other anti-inflammatories
- × Diabetic medications

### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It is considered safe when used at the recommended dose, but like all things try to use it for the shortest time at the lowest dose possible to reduce the risk of anything untoward occurring

### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It is advisable to take the dose after the last feed and to monitor the baby for any side effects; if it occurs stop taking

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

Alcohol may increase the risk of nausea and increasing the acidity in the stomach; so best avoided if it is used for this purpose. Otherwise, appears to be safe to use in moderation.

**Recommended dosage:** 250mg four times a day

### ❖ **GINGKO BILOBA**

#### **What is it used for?**

This is a powerful antioxidant that can enhance circulation of oxygen in the brain, retina, legs and heart. It can improve short and long term memory, enhances concentration, used for hearing problems such as tinnitus, vertigo, impotence and macular degeneration.

#### **When should I be careful?**

- × It can thin the blood, so care is needed if taking anticoagulant medications.
- × It may change blood glucose levels; so take care if diabetic
- × It may increase risk of seizures

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Stomach upset, headache,
- × Dizziness
- × Constipation
- × Increased risk of bleeding

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Anticoagulants such as Warfarin

### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

Limited data, so is not considered safe to use whilst pregnant

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

Limited data, so is not considered safe to use whilst breast-feeding

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

Appears ok to use

**Recommended dosage:** 120-240mg daily

❖ **GINSENG**

**What is it used for?**

There are 5 main types of ginseng (Siberian, American, Korean, Chinese or Indian). They all function to combat weakness, improve memory and performance as well as providing extra energy.

**When should I be careful?**

- × Should not be used if you have high blood pressure
- × Care is needed if diabetic as it can change blood sugar levels

**What are the common side effects?**

There have not been many reported

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Warfarin; it can affect the INR so monitoring is recommended
- × It can possibly affect the amount of Digoxin in the body and cause side effects
- × Care is needed with diabetic and blood-pressure medications as their dosages may need to be changed

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data as to the safety, so it is best not to use whilst pregnant

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data as to the safety, so it is best not to use whilst breast-feeding

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears safe to use in moderation, however may reduce the energy and increased concentration that Ginseng normally is used for.

❖ **GLUCOSAMINE**

**What is it used for?**

This is a naturally found compound that is found in high concentrations in joints and is involved in the formation of nails, tendons, skin, eyes, bones, ligaments and heart valves. Supplements are used in people with osteoarthritis or joint destruction to help increase the cartilage formation between the joints.

**When should I be careful?**

- × If you have Shellfish allergies; take care as it is made from shells of shrimp, lobster and crabs
- × May worsen asthma in some people
- × It may change blood glucose levels; monitor regularly if diabetic

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Gas
- × Bloating
- × Cramps

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Warfarin
- × Cancer medications
- × Diabetic medications

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

Limited data so is best avoided

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

Limited data so is best avoided

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

Appears ok to use

**Recommended dosage:** 1500mg per day

❖ **GRAPE SEED EXTRACT**

**What is it used for?**

This is a powerful anti-oxidant that can be used to protect blood vessels, varicose veins, age-related macular degeneration, it may reduce the bad cholesterol and therefore protect against heart disease.

**When should I be careful?**

× It can thin the blood; take care if on other medications and prior to surgery

**What are the common side effects?**

× Diarrhoea, nausea or vomiting may occur

**What drug interactions might there be?**

× Anti-coagulants such as Warfarin

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data, so supplements should be avoided at this stage

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data, so supplements should be avoided at this stage

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

Alcohol can have the opposite effects of anti-oxidants so may reduce how well this ingredient can work in the body

**Recommended dosage:** 40-80mg per day

❖ **GREEN LIPPED MUSSELL**

**What is it used for?**

This is an edible shellfish that contains amino acids which are the building blocks of body proteins. It can improve the functioning of connective tissues; reduce inflammation, pain and stiffness for osteo and rheumatoid arthritis. It is also a natural source of omega 3 with glucosamine and chondroitin.

**When should I be careful?**

× Monitor symptoms in asthmatics, as some people can be affected

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Diarrhoea
- × Nausea
- × Gas/bloating

**What drug interactions might there be?**

× Blood thinning medications

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data, so it is best avoided

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data, so it is best avoided

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

Limited data, but appears safe to use

**Recommended dosage:** 1150-1500mg daily

## ❖ GREEN TEA

### What is it used for?

This is a powerful antioxidant that has been found to reduce cholesterol, prevent cancer and to thin blood. It has been found to aid weight loss as it can increase the metabolism and regulate blood sugar and insulin levels as it contains 2-4 % caffeine.

### When should I be careful?

- × It can reduce the absorption of iron

### What are the common side effects?

- × Nervousness and irritability
- × Dizziness
- × Anxiety
- × Increased risk of bleeding
- × Irregular heart beat
- × Can increase calcium excreted in urine which may reduce bone density

### What drug interactions might there be?

- × Blood pressure medications
- × Stimulants
- × Anti-coagulants
- × Warfarin
- × Some anti-depressants

### Can I use if I am pregnant?

Don't drink more than 2 cups per day and extra supplementation should not be done whilst pregnant

### Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?

Don't drink more than 2 cups per day extra supplementation should not be done whilst breast-feeding

### Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?

It appears safe; but would have the opposite effect on energy and focus.

## ❖ GUARANA

### What is it used for?

This is a stimulant that increases mental alertness, stamina and endurance as it contains caffeine. It is used in weight loss preparations as it can speed up metabolism and acts as an appetite suppressant.

### When should I be careful?

- × It can increase blood pressure and due to its high caffeine content it can cause side effects such as a rapid heartbeat and palpitations
- × If you are anxious or a poor sleeper it may worsen your symptoms
- × May increase the risk of bleeding
- × Guarana may affect blood glucose levels, so need to check these regularly
- × It can increase pressure in the eyes; so take care if you have glaucoma

### What are the common side effects?

- × Insomnia, nervousness and irritability
- × Nausea, vomiting and stomach pain
- × Increased heart rate and blood pressure and glucose levels
- × Delirium and tremor

### What drug interactions might there be?

- × Avoid all stimulants such as caffeine, cold and flu tablets etc.
- × Some antibiotics
- × Some Anti-depressants
- × Lithium
- × Anticoagulants
- × Nicotine

### Can I use if I am pregnant?

It is not to be used in pregnancy or breastfeeding

### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It is not to be used in pregnancy or breastfeeding

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears ok to use; although it would appear to counter-act the energy and alertness that it is most commonly used for.

### **❖ HOPS**

#### **What is it used for?**

This is a plant used to reduce anxiety, improve sleep and appears to have an oestrogen like effect in the body

#### **When should I be careful?**

- × It should not be used in any oestrogen-sensitive conditions such as uterine, ovarian, breast cancers or endometriosis and fibroids

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Drowsiness; which is also why it is often used

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Do not use with anything else that causes drowsiness; alcohol, antihistamines or anti-nausea drugs etc.

#### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data, so supplements should be avoided at this stage

#### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data, so supplements should be avoided at this stage

#### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

No, you must avoid alcohol whilst taking this ingredient

### **❖ IODINE**

#### **What is it used for?**

This is needed to metabolise excess fats, important for physical and mental development and is necessary for a healthy thyroid function.

#### **When should I be careful?**

- × Care is needed if you currently or have had any thyroid disorders
- × Care is needed if you have any allergies to iodine
- × Only small amounts are needed and it can help to prevent mental retardation in children.

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Nausea diarrhoea
- × Headache
- × Stomach pain
- × Runny nose and metallic taste

#### **What natural food sources is it found in?**

It is found in food sources such as; dairy, iodised salt, saltwater fish, kelp, mushrooms and asparagus and seaweed

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Anti-thyroid medications
- × Lithium
- × Amiodarone
- × Some blood pressure and diuretic medications

#### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It is required for the prevention of complications in the baby, however only **209mcg** per day is required

#### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It is safe to consume, however only 209mcg is the recommended amount to be taken

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears safe to use

**Recommended dosage:** Adults: 150mcg per day

### ❖ **IRON**

#### **What is it used for?**

This is essential for the production of a component of red blood cells which is vital for oxygen to be transported around the body. Low iron levels can be caused by bleeding, excess tea and coffee, menstruating and poor digestion. Symptoms of low iron can appear as brittle/dry hair, dizziness, fatigue, fragile bones and being pale.

#### **When should I be careful?**

- × Care is needed to ensure that excess amounts are not consumed

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Nausea
- × Constipation or diarrhoea
- × Vomiting
- × Dark coloured stools

#### **What natural food sources is it found in?**

It can be found in food sources such as; red meat (beef and lamb), eggs, green leafy, whole grains, almonds, lentils and soybeans.

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Iron is best separated by all medication by 2 hours as it is poorly absorbed and can affect the amount other medications are absorbed
- × Some antibiotics
- × Osteoporosis medications

#### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It is safe to use whilst pregnant, however all women's requirements of iron are different during pregnancy so it is best to work closely with your doctor

#### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It is safe to use whilst pregnant, however all women's requirements of iron are different during pregnancy so it is best to work closely with your doctor

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears safe to use, however alcohol may cause dehydration which may cause more constipation. Also, if iron deficiency is caused by bleeding in the stomach, sometimes alcohol can exacerbate this bleeding.

**Recommended dosage:** men and women over 51: 8mg per day, women 19-50: 18mg per day

### ❖ **JUNIPER**

#### **What is it used for?**

This is used as a diuretic and also as a mild anti-inflammatory to treat some types of arthritis as well as fluid retention.

#### **When should I be careful?**

- × This should not be used if you suffer from any types of disorders of the kidney.
- × Care is needed in diabetes; as it can affect the blood glucose levels
- × Care is needed in people that suffer from high blood pressure as it can change the readings

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Reduce blood glucose levels
- × It can irritate the stomach
- × It can change the blood pressure; needs to be monitored regularly

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Diabetic medications
- × Blood pressure medications

- × Diuretics

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

Limited data, it is not considered safe to use in pregnancy

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

Limited data, it is not considered safe to use whilst breast-feeding

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

No as it is a diuretic, the combination may cause dehydration

**Recommended dosage:** 2-10 G as a diuretic

❖ **KELP**

**What is it used for?**

This is a type of seaweed that contains a high amount of B-group vitamins, iodine and calcium. It can be used for the brain tissue and it may help to treat hair loss, obesity and ulcers, thyroid related disorders as well as improve metabolism and energy.

**When should I be careful?**

- × Don't use if any iodine allergies
- × It may increase the risk of bleeding

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Change thyroid function

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Thyroid medications
- × Anti-coagulants

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It is not recommended to be used whilst pregnant

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It is not recommended to be used whilst breast-feeding

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears safe to use; but may have the opposite effect for energy since it is a relaxant

❖ **KRILL OIL**

**What is it used for?**

This is a high source of Omega 3 essential fatty acids; EPA and DHA and is used to reduce triglycerides, cholesterol, and blood pressure and may assist reduce inflammation and pain in osteoarthritis and PMS.

**When should I be careful?**

- × Take care if you have seafood allergies
- × It can thin the blood, so care is needed if taking anti-coagulant medication or if having surgery

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Thin the blood
- × Heartburn, nausea or diarrhoea
- × Bad breath

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Anti-coagulants; can thin the blood too much and cause bleeding
- × It may reduce the effects of heartburn medication
- × If taking blood pressure or cholesterol medication; your dosage may need to change
- × Xenical; it can cause severe diarrhoea so should be separated by 2 hours at least

**What natural food sources can I find it in?**

It is derived from krill, which is a shrimp like animal used mainly to feed whales in the ocean.

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data, so supplements should be avoided at this stage

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data, so supplements should be avoided at this stage

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears safe to use

**Recommended dosage:** 500-1500-mg per day depending upon your needs

❖ **LECITHIN**

**What is it used for?**

This is a source of omega 3's and it can help to prevent arteriosclerosis, protect against heart disease, improve brain function and can promote energy. It is also responsible for transmitting nerve impulses and can be used to treat liver disease and gall bladder problems.

**When should I be careful?**

× If you suffer from IBS; some side effects may trigger symptoms in some people

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Diarrhoea
- × Nausea
- × Abdominal pain

**What natural food sources is it found in?**

Naturally it is found in foods such as; soybeans, brewer's yeasts, grains, legumes, fish liver, wheat germ, peanuts and whole grains.

**What drug interactions might there be?**

None reported

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data about its safety, so it is best avoided

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data about its safety, so it is best avoided

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears safe to use

**Recommended dosage:** 1-3 G daily

❖ **LYCOPENE**

**What is it used for?**

This is a naturally found chemical in red coloured fruit and vegetables such as watermelon, apricots and tomatoes. It is a powerful anti-oxidant and can be used as anti-aging and to improve the condition of blood vessels in the body.

**What are the common side effects?**

This is well tolerated; unless taken in large doses and may cause diarrhoea or an upset stomach

**What drug interactions might there be?**

There was nothing major reported

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data, so supplements should be avoided at this stage however consuming it in food sources is safe

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data, so supplements should be avoided at this stage however consuming it in food sources is safe

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

Alcohol tends to reduce the antioxidant effects so will reduce its effectiveness

**Recommended dosage:** 30mg daily

### ❖ **MAGNESIUM**

#### **What is it used for?**

This is used as a muscle relaxant, for muscle cramping and pain. Signs of low levels of magnesium include; irritability, nervousness, muscle weakness, twitching and PMS.

#### **When should I be careful?**

- × Too much of magnesium in the body can cause irregular heart-beats and confusion
- × Do not use supplements if you have any disorders of the kidney

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea

#### **What natural food sources is it found in?**

Magnesium can be found in foods such as; dairy, seafood, avocados, bananas, apples, brown rice, green leafy veges, soy, tofu, broccoli, green leafy vegetables, butts and salmon.

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Some antibiotics
- × Magnesium should be separated from osteoporosis medication by at least 2 hours
- × It can have an additive effect with other muscle relaxants
- × Magnesium should not be taken with diuretics

#### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It is safe to use in pregnancy and breastfeeding but only in the recommended daily dosing not in excess

#### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It is safe to use in pregnancy and breastfeeding but only in the recommended daily dosing not in excess

#### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears safe to use, however not in excess as it may have an additive effect as a muscle relaxant

**Recommended dosage:** 200-400mg per day

### ❖ **MANGANESE**

#### **What is it used for?**

It can increase the strength of bones and therefore help to reduce osteoporosis from occurring; it may reduce osteoarthritis symptoms and may help in PMS symptoms.

#### **When should I be careful?**

- × If you have any disorders of the liver check with your doctor first as to how much you are allowed to have as excess use can cause further damage

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Well tolerated if below the recommended daily amount

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × It can interact with some antibiotics, so it is best to separate by 2 hours

#### **What natural food sources can I find it in?**

It can be found in legumes, whole grains, green leafy vegetable and nuts such as almonds.

#### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

Obtaining it from food sources and a pregnancy formula is ok, provided the dosage is less than 11mg per day

#### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

Obtaining it from food sources and a breast-feeding formula is ok, provided the dosage is less than 11mg per day

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears ok to use, but may increase the risk of falls from occurring and also may increase fluid retention.

**Recommended dosage:** bone health: 5mg per day

### ❖ **MELATONIN**

#### **What is it used for?**

This is a naturally occurring hormone that is a powerful antioxidant, stimulates the immune system and helps to keep our bodies in sync with the rhythms of day and night. It is used to regulate sleep especially to speed up the recovery of jet lag and to get used to time differences of day and night.

Low dose homeopathic preparations are available OTC; however you can get high concentration formulations from your doctor that you take generally as a 3 week course to kick starts the body to establish a normal rhythm again.

#### **When should I be careful?**

- × It may change blood glucose levels
- × Melatonin may increase blood pressure
- × It may increase the risk of seizure

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Next day drowsiness
- × Headache
- × Irritability
- × Stomach cramps

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Some anti-depressants
- × Diabetic drugs
- × Anticoagulants
- × Sedatives

#### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data about its safety, so is best avoided

#### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data about its safety, so is best avoided

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It is not considered safe to drink alcohol whilst taking Melatonin

**Recommended dosage:** 0.3-5mg at bedtime

### ❖ **MILK THISTLE (silymarin)**

#### **What is it used for?**

This is a powerful anti-oxidant and an anti-inflammatory and is used to protect the liver from oxidative damage of toxins, drugs, effects of alcohol and it can help to promote the growth of new liver cells.

#### **When should I be careful?**

There is a theory that it acts like oestrogen, so it is advisable not to use in hormone sensitive conditions such as endometriosis, fibroids and ovarian cancer.

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Diarrhoea
- × Nausea
- × Indigestion
- × Gas and bloating

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Oestrogen
- × Certain drugs metabolised by the liver, so check with your pharmacist

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

No, it cannot be used if you are pregnant

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

No, it should not be used if you are breast-feeding

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

Since it is usually used to cleanse the liver, it is a good idea to limit or completely avoid alcohol during this process

**Recommended dosage:** 140mg three times daily

❖ **MSM**

**What is it used for?**

This is organic sulphur compound that is used to heal injuries by reducing pain and inflammation as well as to nourish hair skin and nails. It can be used in osteoarthritis, allergies, wrinkles and asthma.

**When should I be careful?**

× Take care if you suffer from IBS, as some side effects may trigger an acute attack

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Nausea, diarrhoea, bloating
- × Headache
- × Insomnia
- × Itch

**What drug interactions might there be?**

There is limited data

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data about its safety, so is best avoided

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data about its safety, so is best avoided

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It is considered safe to use

**Recommended dosage:** 500mg three times a day

❖ **OLIVE LEAF EXTRACT**

**What is it used for?**

This is an herbal supplement that is found to boost the immune system and may have mild anti-bacterial and anti-viral capabilities. It is used for colds and flu, asthma, hay fever, to reduce blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose levels.

**When should I be careful?**

× Take care if you have any allergies

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Nausea
- × Rash
- × Laxative

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Blood pressure medications
- × Diabetic medications

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data about its safety, so is best avoided

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data about its safety, so is best avoided

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

Usually you take Olive leaf to boost your immune system; so alcohol can have a dehydrating effect and delay recovery

**Recommended dosage:** 5 mL three times daily with food

❖ **OXERUTINS**

**What is it used for?**

These are plant derivatives that work to reduce leaking from capillaries; so used to reduce varicose veins over-the-counter.

**When should I be careful?**

- × Should not be used in children under 12 years of age
- × Take care driving if it causes drowsiness

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Gas, indigestion or stomach pain/cramps
- × Diarrhoea
- × Drowsiness or dizziness

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Unsure of any at this stage

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data, so supplements should be avoided at this stage

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data, so supplements should be avoided at this stage

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

If using to reduce varicose veins, then it is best to avoid alcohol as it may increase fluid retention and reduce the effectiveness of treatment

**Recommended dosage:** 1000mg per day

❖ **PRIMROSE OIL**

**What is it used for?**

This is an excellent source of omega 6 essential fatty acids and can be used to prevent hardening of the arteries in the heart, PMS, reduces pain and inflammation, menopause symptoms and eczema. Used for breast pain, arthritis and osteoporosis

**When should I be careful?**

- × They can thin the blood so care is needed if taking any medication that does this
- × It can increase the risk of seizures

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Stomach ache
- × Nausea, diarrhoea
- × Headache

**What natural food sources is it found in?**

Spirulina and blackcurrant oils

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × This can interact with anticoagulants

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It is not considered safe to use in pregnancy

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It is considered safe to use whilst breast-feeding after the last feed

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears ok to use

**Recommended dosage:** 3-4 G daily

#### ❖ **PROBIOTICS**

##### **What is it used for?**

These are usually live bacteria that are taken to restore the 'good bacteria' that normally lives in our gut, skin and organs. These are normally depleted through drinking, taking antibiotics and other medications including the contraceptive pill. It can reduce constipation, diarrhoea, stomach upsets that these medications can cause as well as reduce the incidence of oral or vaginal thrush. It can be helpful in treating eczema/dermatitis by allowing the body to digest and utilise food appropriately. There are various different strains available now, all claiming to be beneficial to different parts of the body.

##### **When should I be careful?**

- × Care is needed if taking other medications; should be separated by at least 2 hours
- × If you are taking immune suppressant medications, check with your doctor first before taking any live bacteria
- × Live bacteria needs to be kept refrigerated; so ensure that the temperature is kept between 2-8 degrees Celcius

##### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Are well tolerated, but may produce gas or bloating in some people

##### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Antibiotics; need to be separated by 2 hours
- × Immune suppressant medication

##### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It is safe to use at the recommended dose during pregnancy

##### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It is safe to use at the recommended dose during pregnancy

##### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

Ideally, you should avoid alcohol as it may further disrupt the 'healthy' normal balance within the gut.

#### ❖ **RED CLOVER**

##### **What is it used for?**

This is used to treat menopause symptoms as it contains high amount of isoflavones which are changed in the body to become similar to oestrogen and reduce hot flashes.

##### **When should I be careful?**

- × It must not be used in any hormone based conditions such ovarian, breast, uterine cancer, endometriosis or fibroids.  
If there is any history of such conditions in your family you must not take it until you have consulted your doctor
- × It may increase the risk of bleeding

##### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Muscle aches
- × Headaches
- × Nausea
- × Bleeding

##### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × It can interact with anticoagulants to increase the risk of bleeding
- × It may reduce the effects of the pill; extra precautions are required whilst taking it
- × It can affect the metabolism of some drugs by the liver

##### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It should not be taken during pregnancy

##### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It should not be taken whilst breastfeeding

##### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears ok to use in moderation, providing that alcohol does not worsen menopause symptoms in yourself.

#### ❖ **RED RASBERRY**

##### **What is it used for?**

This is a natural product that is used to help reduce menstrual bleeding, relaxes the uterine spasms and strengthens the uterine walls. It can be used in menopause to reduce hot flashes and as a powerful antioxidant.

##### **When should I be careful?**

- × It has been used with controversy in pregnancy and should only be used on doctors supervision
- × It should not be used in hormone sensitive conditions such as uterine and ovarian cancers, endometriosis and fibroids

##### **What are the common side effects?**

- × There has not been any that have been reported

##### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Do not use with other hormones

##### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It has been used with controversy in pregnancy and should only be used on doctor's consent and breastfeeding.

##### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

Limited data for its safety so it is best avoided unless only doctor's consent and supervision

##### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

You should not be consuming alcohol if you are pregnant and using this anyhow. If using for menopause and hot flashes, avoid alcohol if alcohol worsens these symptoms for you.

#### ❖ **RESVERATROL**

##### **What is it used for?**

This is a chemical that is found in red wine, red grapes and peanuts that are effective in being excellent antioxidants; reduce pain, swelling and reduce the risk of heart disease. Some studies suggest that it can also have oestrogen like effects and may help reduce menopause symptoms

##### **When should I be careful?**

- × Hormone sensitive conditions such as uterine, ovarian, breast cancer, fibroids or endometriosis
- × It can increase the risk of bleeding

##### **What are the common side effects?**

- × It appears to be well tolerated

##### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Anti-coagulants including Warfarin and anti-inflammatories

##### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data, so supplements should be avoided at this stage however consuming it in food sources is safe

##### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data, so supplements should be avoided at this stage however consuming it in food sources is safe

##### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears ok to use, but may reduce the antioxidant abilities

**Recommended dosage:** 300-500mg per day

#### ❖ **SAGE**

##### **What is it used for?**

This is an herb that can be used in menopause to reduce hot flashes and increase memory in Alzheimer's patients.

##### **When should I be careful?**

- × It can change blood glucose levels, so care is needed in diabetics

- × It can increase blood pressure, so regular monitoring of blood pressure is required
- × It has been found to increase seizures; so do not use if epileptic

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Low doses appear safe; but high doses may impair the liver so take care if any history of disorders

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Diabetic medication; it may affect the dosage required
- × Blood pressure medication; it may affect the dosage required

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data, so supplements should be avoided at this stage however consuming it in food sources is safe

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data, so supplements should be avoided at this stage however consuming it in food sources is safe

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears safe to use, however alcohol may increase hot flashes in some women so reduce the effects of sage

❖ **SAW PALMETTO**

**What is it used for?**

This is a common herb that is used to treat symptoms of prostate enlargement as it can inhibit the formation of a form of testosterone that can contribute to the enlargement of the prostate.

**When should I be careful?**

- × Liver or pancreas problems may be exacerbated whilst taking Saw Palmetto
- × It may cause bleeding so take care if taking blood thinning medications

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Dizziness
- × Headache
- × Nausea, vomiting, constipation or diarrhoea

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Anticoagulants; can have an additive effect of thinning the blood

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It should not be used in pregnancy

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It should not be used whilst breast-feeding

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears ok to use

**Recommended dosage:** 160mg twice daily

❖ **SCHIZANDRA**

**What is it used for?**

This is an herb that is used to increase the resistance to disease/stress and increase energy as well as preventing early aging and improves liver function. It can also help to improve concentration and co-ordination.

**When should I be careful?**

- × It can increase the risk of seizures in epileptics
- × It can increase the symptoms of GORD
- × It can increase the risk of bleeding

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Heartburn
- × Stomach pain
- × Reduce appetite

### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Warfarin
- × It can change the metabolism of some drugs; check with your pharmacist

### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data, so it is not considered safe to use during pregnancy

### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data, so it is not considered safe to use whilst breast-feeding

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

There is limited data, but appears safe to use

**Recommended dosage:** 500mg-2G daily

## ❖ **SELENIUM**

### **What is it used for?**

This is a powerful antioxidant especially when combined with vitamin E to help boost the immune system; it can help maintain a healthy heart, liver, skin and may assist the metabolism of fat.

### **When should I be careful?**

- × Like all supplements ensure that you are not getting too much into your system or side effects can occur

### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Nausea and vomiting
- × Nail changes
- × Reduces energy
- × Can change blood glucose levels
- × It can cause liver and kidney issues if having too much

### **What natural food sources is it found in?**

It can be found naturally in foods such as; grains, brewer's yeast, broccoli, brown rice, chicken, dairy, seafood and whole grains. Liver, fish and crab

### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Warfarin
- × Diabetic medications
- × Blood pressure medications
- × Anti-cancer medication

### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

Food sources are ok, but medicinal doses should not be used

### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

Food sources are ok, but medicinal doses should not be used

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears safe to use

**Recommended dosage:** pregnant: 60mcg, adult: 55mcg, high cholesterol: 100-200mcg Daily

## ❖ **SILICON**

### **What is it used for?**

This is used as it is needed for the formation of collagen in bones as well as the connective tissue in healthy nails, bones, skin and hair.

### **When should I be careful?**

- × Its use may increase the risk of Kidney stones

### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Kidney stones can occur if using long term

**What natural food sources is it found in?**

Naturally it can be found in alfalfa, brown rice, soybeans, and green leafy and whole grains.

**What drug interactions might there be?**

There was nothing major reported

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

Food sources is ok but not in medicinal amounts

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

Food sources is ok but not in medicinal amounts

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears safe to use

**Recommended dosage:** 40mg for stronger bones

❖ **SKULL CAP**

**What is it used for?**

This is used because it may assist in treating sleep disorders, it can reduce anxiety, fatigue, and hyperactivity.

**When should I be careful?**

- × It should not be used in children under 6
- × Skullcap should not be used in diabetes as it can fluctuate the blood glucose levels

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Dizziness
- × Twitching
- × Arrhythmias

**What drug interactions might there be?**

No known interactions that have been reported

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is only limited data so should be avoided during pregnancy

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It must not be used in pregnancy or breastfeeding

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

Alcohol should be avoided if suffering from sleep disorders as it can affect the natural sleep pattern and cycles

❖ **SLIPPERY ELM**

**What is it used for?**

This is used to soothe inflamed mucus membranes of the bowel or stomach and hence is used traditionally to treat diarrhoea, constipation or ulcers.

**When should I be careful?**

- × It should be separated from all medications by at least 2 hours to reduce any interactions
- × Take care in inflammatory bowel disease as it may trigger or flare up an attack

**What are the common side effects?**

No known interactions have been reported

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Separate from all meds by 2 hours

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is only limited data so should be avoided

### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is only limited data so should be avoided

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It may have a laxative effect, so alcohol should be avoided in case it causes dehydration to occur

**Recommended dosage:** 400-500 mg three to four times a day

## ❖ **SPIRULINA**

### **What is it used for?**

It is a microalgae that contains valuable components such as; omega 6, B12, iron, high level of protein, essential amino acids and chlorophyll. It can reduce the appetite; produce weight loss, treat PMS, stabilise blood sugar levels if used in between meals due to its high protein levels and increase energy levels.

### **When should I be careful?**

× If you are taking immunosuppressant medications, care is needed whilst taking Spirulina

### **What are the common side effects?**

× Nausea and vomiting

### **What drug interactions might there be?**

× Immunosuppressant medications  
× iron

### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data, so it is best avoided

### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data, so it is best avoided

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears safe to use

**Recommended dosage:** 1-10g daily

## ❖ **ST JOHNS WORT**

### **What is it used for?**

This is used clinically to help treat mild symptoms of depression to elevate the mood. It increases serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine to help mood and PMS, menopause but it can take up to 3 to 4 weeks to work fully

### **When should I be careful?**

× Severe depression; it should only be used for mild depression. For symptoms greater than this, you should discuss options with your doctor  
× It can cause sensitivity to light, so take care whilst in the sun

### **What are the common side effects?**

× Dizziness, dry mouth and skin rash  
× Nausea and headache

### **What drug interactions might there be?**

St John's Wort has a number of interactions noted; so please check with your pharmacist first before taking as below is not the full list!

× Lipitor: SJW reduces the amount of Lipitor in the body  
× Pill: SJW reduces the amount of pill in the body  
× Digoxin: SJW reduces the amount of digoxin in the body  
× Paroxetine: there is an additive effect and it can cause Serotonin syndrome; dangerous  
× Sertraline: there is an additive effect and it can cause sert syndrome; dangerous  
× Theophylline: SJW reduces the amount of theophylline in the body  
× Warfarin: SJW reduces the amount of warfarin in the body

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It must not be used in pregnancy or breastfeeding

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It must not be used in pregnancy or breastfeeding

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It is good practice to avoid using alcohol whilst taking St John's Wort until a stable dose and result has been seen

**Recommended dosage:** 300 mg daily- three times daily

❖ **TRIBULUS**

**What is it used for?**

This is derived from a plant and may increase hormone levels in men; however studies have not shown conclusive evidence for its effectiveness

**When should I be careful?**

- × If you have any history of prostate disorders; its use may increase the size of the prostate
- × It may reduce blood glucose levels; so take care if diabetic

**What are the common side effects?**

- × May enlarge the prostate

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Diabetic medications; it may affect the dosage required
- × It can interact with Lithium

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

No

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

No

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears ok to use in moderation

❖ **TUMERIC (curcumin)**

**What is it used for?**

This has been used as a strong antioxidant that stops the oxidation of cholesterol and the formation of plaque in arteries. It also is an anti-inflammatory so used for arthritis

**When should I be careful?**

- × Care needs to be taken in those taking anticoagulants as they can thin the blood.
- × Should not be used if you have had any history of gall bladder or gall stone issues as it may increase this risk
- × It can increase risk of bleeding, so take care if taking any blood thinning medication
- × It may increase heartburn and acid so don't use if you have GORD

**What are the common side effects?**

- × Nausea and diarrhoea
- × Dizziness

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Anticoagulants; can have an additive effect of thinning the blood

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is limited data, so is not considered safe to use whilst pregnant

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is limited data, so is not considered safe to use whilst breast-feeding

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears to be safe to use

**Recommended dosage:** 500mg twice a day of curcumin

### ❖ **VALERIAN**

#### **What is it used for?**

This is used in sleeping aids over-the-counter as it acts as a sedative, it can reduce anxiety, insomnia and stress.

#### **When should I be careful?**

- × You should not take it if you are currently taking any other sedatives
- × If it is not working then you should see your doctor for other alternatives

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × Tired the next day or dizziness

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Sedatives
- × Alcohol

#### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

There is only limited data so should be avoided

#### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

There is only limited data so should be avoided

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

No, you should not have alcohol whilst taking Valerian.

**Recommended dosage:** 400-900mg 30 minutes to 2 hours before bed

### ❖ **VITAMIN A**

#### **What is it used for?**

This is a fat soluble vitamin and potent antioxidant that is necessary to prevent night blindness, skin disorders such as acne and aging and excellent for the immune system.

#### **When should I be careful?**

- × If you have liver damage, you should be careful taking vitamin A as it can be toxic if taken in large amounts
- × *It can cause birth defects in pregnancy so it is vital not to go over the daily recommended levels.*
- × It can increase the risk of bleeding; so care is needed if taking certain medication

#### **What are the common side effects?**

- × If you take too much Vitamin A it can cause; fatigue, nausea, vomiting and sweating

#### **What natural food sources is it found in?**

It is found in food sources such as; animal livers, milk, egg, green and yellow fruits and vegetables, carrots, pumpkin and garlic.

#### **What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Some antibiotics
- × Liver toxic drugs
- × Warfarin

#### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

*It can cause birth defects in pregnancy so it is vital not to go over the daily recommended levels. Need less than 3000IU per day including supplements and food sources*

#### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It can be taken, but should not go over the RDI

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

Because Vitamin A can be toxic to the liver, alcohol should be limited as it may contribute to damage to the liver

**Recommended dosage:** men: 3000 IU and women: 2300IU pregnant: 2600 IU

## ❖ **VITAMIN B**

### **What is it used for?**

It is a good idea to take a B-complex as it contains all of the B group vitamins and as a collective are vital for healthy nerves, skin, eyes, hair, liver and mouth, muscle tone of stomach and for brain function. They are excellent to use to increase stamina, endurance and to improve mood when suffering from depression.

### **Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It appears safe to use

### **Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It appears safe to use

### **Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears safe to use, however may reduce the energy and endurance benefits that it can provide.

#### **B1: thiamine**

- ✓ This is used to increase circulation, carbohydrate metabolism and cognitive activity.
- ✓ It is particularly useful in preventing or treating the impairment that alcohol can cause to the system.
- ✓ It is found in foods such as; brown rice, eggs, fish, legume, whole grains, broccoli and oatmeal.

#### **B2: riboflavin**

- ✓ This is needed for the formation of red blood cells, can reduce eye fatigue and help in the metabolism of carbohydrates, fats and proteins.
- ✓ It is found in food sources such as; cheese, eggs, legumes, poultry, spinach and whole grains.

#### **B3: niacin, nicotinic acid, niacinamide**

- ✓ This is needed for good circulation, healthy skin and the functioning of the nervous system.
- ✓ It is found in food sources such as; brewer's yeast, broccoli, carrot, fish, peanuts and potatoes

#### **B5: pantothenic acid**

- ✓ This is required for the production of hormones and can help to metabolise foods to get energy.
- ✓ It can be found in foods sources such as; eggs, kidneys, legumes, liver, mushrooms and nuts.

#### **B6: pyridoxine**

- ✓ This is can reduce water retention, promotes red blood cell formation, can inhibit the formation of a toxic chemical homocysteine which attacks the heart muscle and can be used to improve mood.
- ✓ It is found in food sources such as; brewer's yeast, carrots, chicken, eggs, spinach and sunflower seeds

#### **B12: cyanocobalamin**

- ✓ This is needed for the formation of red blood cells and helps in the utilisation of iron.
- ✓ It can produce a more restful and refreshing sleep.
- ✓ It can be found in food sources such as; liver, kidneys, dairy products, seafood, eggs, soybeans and kelp.

## ❖ **VITAMIN C**

### **What is it used for?**

This is a powerful antioxidant and is necessary for healthy tissue growth/repair and is needed for the formation of collagen and is hence a powerful anti-aging tool. It is required for healthy gums and it boosts the immune system protein and increases the absorption of iron. It can also be used to healing of burns and wounds and may also help to reduce blood pressure.

### **When should I be careful?**

- × It can affect the blood glucose levels; so if diabetic you will need to monitor your blood glucose levels

### **What are the common side effects?**

- × They are available in many forms, however try to avoid chewable tablets as they may damage tooth enamel.
- × It can cause diarrhoea as it is a natural stimulant laxative.
- × Nausea, vomiting or cramping

- × Headaches
- × If taking more than 2G can increase risk of kidney stones

**What natural food sources is it found in?**

It is found in food sources such as; berries, citrus fruits, green vegetables, brussell sprouts, spinach, onions and grapefruit.

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Separate from all medications by 2 hours
- × It can interact with warfarin, so take care

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

The recommended daily intake of 120mg is safe to use, but more than this is not recommended as it can act as a stimulant laxative which is not ideal

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

The recommended daily intake of 120mg is safe to use, but more than this is not recommended as it can act as a stimulant laxative which is not ideal and may have the same effect in the baby

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

If you are using vitamin C whilst you are sick, then you should avoid alcohol as it can cause dehydration and delay the recovery. However, on a daily basis as a preventative it is safe to use.

**Recommended dosage:** 1-3 G daily for cold

❖ **VITAMIN D**

**What is it used for?**

This is essential for the absorption and utilisation of calcium and phosphorus for the normal growth and development of bones and teeth. It protects against muscle weakness and regulates the heartbeat. It can also be used to reduce the risk of falls, prevent cancers, reduce cholesterol and blood glucose levels.

Vitamin D3 is the active form and is only available from sunlight or supplements

Vitamin D2 can be found in food but needs to be converted into the active form in the body.

**When should I be careful?**

- × Diabetics will need to monitor blood glucose levels
- × Some reports suggest that it may increase the risk of kidney disease; watch.

**What are the common side effects?**

- × If a large enough dose is taken it can cause; nausea, vomiting, headaches, fatigue and dry mouth

**What natural food sources is it found in?**

It is found in food sources such as; fish liver oils, fatty saltwater fish, dairy, eggs, liver and oatmeal. herring, sardines, mackerel, tuna.

**What drug interactions might there be?**

- × Aluminium; needs to be separated by 2 hours
- × Digoxin
- × Some blood pressure medication
- × Some diuretics

**Can I use if I am pregnant?**

It is safe to use in doses less than 600 IU per day on Dr's advice.

**Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?**

It is safe to use in doses less than 600 IU per day on Dr's advice.

**Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?**

It appears safe to use, however if consuming moderate amounts it may cause drowsiness which may increase the risk of falls which may cause harm

**Recommended dosage:** 400-1000 IU per day

## ❖ VITAMIN E

### What is it used for?

This is a powerful antioxidant that prevents against heart disease, cancer, improves circulation and tissue repair. It can be used to reduce scarring from wounds, promotes healthy skin, hair and nails as well as protect the liver and can help reduce menopause symptoms.

### When should I be careful?

× It can increase the risk of bleeding; take care if using anti-coagulants

### What are the common side effects?

× In high doses; nausea, diarrhoea, fatigue, headaches, weakness and bleeding

### What natural food sources is it found in?

It is found in food sources such as; eggs, wheat germ, dark green leafy, legumes, nuts, seeds, whole grains, brown rice, eggs and soybeans.

### What drug interactions might there be?

× Anti-coagulants

### Can I use if I am pregnant?

It is safe to use the recommended daily intake, but you should not have more than this

### Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?

It is safe to use the recommended daily intake, but you should not have more than this

### Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?

It appears safe to use, however alcohol may reduce the antioxidant effects of vitamin E

**Recommended dosage:** PMS: 200 IU twice daily 2 days before and for 3days. RA: 600 IU bd

## ❖ VITAMIN K

### What is it used for?

This is a fat soluble vitamin that is necessary for blood clotting, bone formation, and a healthy liver function.

### When should I be careful?

- × People taking warfarin should not be indulging in vitamin K as it has the opposite effect to Warfarin and will make it less effective.
- × Care is needed if you have kidney and liver disease

### What are the common side effects?

There has been few reported at the recommended daily intake

### What natural food sources is it found in?

It is found in food sources such as; asparagus, broccoli, brussel sprouts, dark green leafy, soybeans, liver and egg yolks.

### What drug interactions might there be?

× Warfarin

### Can I use if I am pregnant?

It is safe to consume it in food sources, but should not take extra supplementation if pregnant

### Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?

It is safe to consume it in food sources, but should not take extra supplementation if pregnant

### Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?

It appears safe to use in moderation

**Recommended dosage:** men: 120 mcg, women: 90mcg daily

## ❖ WILD YAM

### What is it used for?

This is a plant product that can be converted into an oestrogen like product in a laboratory; but as it does not have this ability which is why there is conflicting evidence to its effectiveness to treat menopause and menstrual symptoms.

### When should I be careful?

- × It should not be used in hormone sensitive conditions such as ovarian, breast, uterine cancer, fibroids or endometriosis.

### What are the common side effects?

- × It may cause vomiting

### What drug interactions might there be?

- × It should not be used with other hormone products

### Can I use if I am pregnant?

No

### Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?

No

### Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?

It appears ok to use, but may increase fluid retention and hot flashes in some women

**Recommended dosage:** dried root form; 1-2 teaspoons three times per day

## ❖ ZINC

### What is it used for?

This is an antioxidant that can be used to regulate the activity of oil glands, protein synthesis, collagen formation, promotes healthy immune system and healing of wounds, eczema or acne.

### When should I be careful?

- × Care is needed if you have any disorders of the kidney

### What are the common side effects?

- × Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea
- × Metallic taste
- × Kidney damage

### What natural food sources is it found in?

It is found in food sources such as; lamb, seafood, legumes, nuts, eggs, mushrooms, soybeans, whole grains and liver.

### What drug interactions might there be?

- × It can interact with some antibiotics

### Can I use if I am pregnant?

It is safe to use, but you should consume less than 40mg per day

### Can I use whilst I am breast feeding?

It is safe to use, but you should consume less than 40mg per day

### Can I have alcohol whilst taking this medication?

It appears safe to use

**Recommended dosage:** less than 40mg per day