

HERBS AND SURGERY... DID YOU KNOW?

Herbal supplements can be just as dangerous as prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs when it comes to their interaction with anesthesia. Be sure to tell your doctor about any drugs — including herbal supplements — that you're taking and how much you're taking as soon as possible if you're anticipating any surgery.

According to the American Society of Anesthesiologists, the following herbs can affect heart rate and blood pressure:

Ginseng. May cause rapid heartbeat and increase blood pressure.

Golden seal. May cause or worsen high blood pressure.

Ephedra (ma-huang). May elevate blood pressure and heart rate.
Ephedra is commonly used as an appetite suppressant.

Licorice. May increase blood pressure. This herb isn't to be confused with candy licorice, which contains little or no actual licorice. Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) commonly is used to treat stomach pain.

The following herbs may increase your risk of bleeding:

Garlic - Ginger - Ginkgo - Feverfew - Danshen - Dong Quai

Stop taking herbal supplements at least 2 to 3 weeks before surgery to allow them to clear from your body. If this isn't possible, bring the herbal product in its original container to the hospital, so the anesthesiologist knows exactly what you're taking.

Source: Mayo Clinic