

## HERBAL HONESTY

We request that you stop taking any herbal medications or remedies at least **2 weeks** prior to surgery. While many herbals claim to resolve certain health issues, they can actually do more harm than good when it comes to surgery.

### **Following is a list of the TOP herbals to withhold prior to surgery and why:**

**Echinacea** is sometimes taken to relieve throat infections, but it may reduce immuno-suppressant effectiveness, and may delay healing and increase the risk of infection.

**Ephedra\*\*** (ma huang) is sometimes taken to promote weight loss, increase energy, and treat asthma. During surgery though, it can affect cardiovascular function and may cause cardiomyopathy or thrombotic stroke (life-threatening conditions). \*\*Applies to all diet aids or supplements whether natural, over-the-counter or prescription.

**Feverfew**, commonly used as a migraine prophylactic, may enhance bleeding by possible inhibition of platelet activity.

**Garlic** may lower blood pressure, but it also increases the risk of bleeding.

**Ginkgo Biloba** is used to improve memory and to increase blood circulation. However, it may reduce platelets, which are needed for blood to clot.

**Ginseng**, one of the most popular herbal preparations in the world believed to boost vitality, has been associated with episodes of hypertension and tachycardia. It may also increase the risk of bleeding during surgery.

**Kava-Kava** is used to decrease anxiety, but it may prolong the sedative effects of anesthesia.

**St. John's Wort**, which is taken to treat anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders, may intensify or prolong the effects of some narcotic drugs and anesthetic agents.

**Valerian** is used to treat insomnia, but it may also compound anesthetic effects.

**Vitamin E** and **Fish Oil**, although not herbals, should also be withheld prior to surgery as they can prolong coagulation (cause excessive bleeding).

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Because of the very serious side effects of these medications, *your surgery may actually be cancelled* if you have not withheld these as requested.

Although not as critical, following is a list (not all-inclusive however) of other herbal supplements to avoid prior to surgery to help optimize your outcome and eliminate unnecessary risk:

Aloe, Alfalfa, Anise, Asafoetida, Black Cohosh, Bogbean, Celery, Chamomile, Chondroitin, Cloves, Clover, Cranberry, Danshen, Devil's Claw, Dong Quai, Fenugreek, Fever Few, Ginger, Glucosamine, Goldenseal, Green Tea, Hawthorn, Horse Chestnut, Licorice, Lovage, Meadowsweet, Nettle, Onion, Papain, Parsley, Passion Flower, Poplar, Q-10, Quassia, Rue, Turmeric, Willow Bark

As a general rule, if you are going to undergo surgery, it is best to be in your healthiest natural state. In other words, take only doctor-recommended and prescription medications as directed and forego all else for the two weeks prior to your surgery. Typically it is safe to resume your normal regimen within a few days after surgery if you are not experiencing any complications.

**For your own safety, it is very important that you inform your surgeon as soon as possible about any medications that you are taking *or have taken recently*, including prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbals, dietary and natural supplements.**