



Food-Drug Interactions

What are food-drug interactions?

Food-drug interactions result from medicines reacting with foods or beverages in the diet.

Why should you be concerned?

Food-drug reactions can sometimes make the drugs less or more effective. They can also cause serious and dangerous health problems.

In what ways can foods and drugs interact?

- Food can speed up or slow down the action of the drug
- Some drugs can change the way the body uses nutrients
- Drugs may make you want to eat more food or suppress your appetite

What are some common food-drug interactions?

- **Grapefruit** with some medicines used to treat seizures, depression, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and pain
- **Alcohol** with some medicines used to treat asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema (bronchodilators), high blood pressure, allergies, and pain
- **Caffeine** with some medicines used to treat asthma, chronic bronchitis, emphysema (bronchodilators), bacterial and fungal infections (quinolones), depression and anxiety disorders, and to relieve pain and promote healing (histamine blockers)
- **Leafy greens** and other Vitamin K-rich foods with Coumadin and other blood thinners.



What should you do to reduce your risk?

- Know the facts about your medicines!
- Take medicines with water, not juice.
- Always ask your doctor and pharmacist about any possible food reactions for a new medicine (see list below for suggestions).
- If you experience any unusual symptoms, seek help immediately.
- Keep a list of all the medicines you take.

Questions to Consider Asking About Your Prescription.

Name of Medicine: _____ **Date:** _____

How often do I need to take the medicine? _____

How much medicine do I take each time? _____

- **Should this medicine be taken:**
 - with a meal?
 - on an empty stomach?
- **Is it OK to drink regular coffee or tea while taking this medicine?**
 - Yes
 - No
- **Should I avoid alcohol (beer, wine, mixed drinks) while taking this medicine?**
 - No
 - Yes
- **I normally eat greens. Do I need to change that while taking this medicine?**
 - Yes
 - No

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