

Significant Risks Associated with Herbs and their Potential Side Effects

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DESCRIPTION

Herbs have been used for thousands of years for medicinal purposes, and many people continue to use them today. While herbs are often perceived as a natural and safe alternative to pharmaceuticals, they can have side effects and risks just like any other medication. This study explores some of the potential side effects of herbs and why it is essential to be aware of them. One of the most significant risks associated with herbs is their potential to interact with medications.

Many herbs contain active compounds that can interact with prescription drugs, leading to harmful side effects. For example, the herb ginseng, commonly used to increase energy and reduce stress, can interact with blood-thinning medications, leading to increased bleeding. Similarly, the herb garlic, often used to lower cholesterol and blood pressure, can interact with blood thinners and cause excessive bleeding. Therefore, it is essential to be aware of potential interactions and to discuss the use of herbs with a healthcare provider, particularly if a person is taking prescription medications. Another potential side effect of herbs is allergic reactions. Like any other substance, herbs can trigger an allergic response in some individuals. Common herbs that can cause allergic reactions include chamomile, which can cause a rash or hives in some people, and echinacea, which can cause anaphylaxis in some individuals. Additionally, some herbs, such as St. John's Wort, can cause photosensitivity, making the skin more sensitive to sunlight. Therefore, it is crucial to be aware of potential allergens and to seek medical attention if any symptoms occur. Herbs can also have side effects on their own, even without interacting with prescription medications or causing allergic reactions. For example, the herb kava, often used to treat anxiety and promote relaxation, has been associated with liver

damage. Similarly, the herb comfrey, which is used topically to relieve pain, can cause liver damage and cancer when taken internally. Therefore, it is essential to research the potential side effects of any herb before using it and to discuss any concerns with a healthcare provider.

It is also essential to note that the quality and purity of herbs can vary widely. Unlike pharmaceuticals, which are subject to rigorous testing and regulation, herbs are not regulated in the same way. Therefore, it is crucial to purchase herbs from reputable sources and to avoid herbs that make exaggerated or unfounded claims. Additionally, it is essential to follow recommended dosages and to be aware of any potential interactions with other medications or supplements.

Finally, it is essential to practice informed decision-making when choosing to use herbs. While some herbs have been shown to be effective in treating certain conditions, there is often limited scientific evidence to support their use. Additionally, some herbs may not be effective for everyone and may have risks that outweigh the potential benefits. Therefore, it is crucial to research the evidence supporting the use of any herb and to discuss any concerns with a healthcare provider.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while herbs can be a useful tool in promoting health and wellness, they are not without risks. Potential side effects of herbs include interactions with prescription medications, allergic reactions, and side effects on their own. It is important to practice informed decision-making when choosing to use herbs and to discuss any concerns with a healthcare provider. By doing so, individuals can make informed choices about their health and avoid potential risks associated with herbs.

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