

The following information is an educational aid only. It is not intended as medical advice for individual conditions or treatments. Talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist before following any medical regimen to see if it is safe and effective for you.

**ST. JOHN'S WORT**  
(Hypericum perforatum)

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**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

- The use of herbs, vitamins, minerals and other dietary supplements is becoming very popular. As more people use dietary supplements, more interactions are reported. Some of these interactions may be very harmful; others may only be reported in animals or in the laboratory at this time.
- Keep in mind that this document may not include every interaction that is known. Although much research has been done to cover as many interactions as possible, you should still talk to your healthcare provider before taking dietary supplements. Even if a medicine, supplement, or food is not listed below, an interaction is still possible. This is also true for interactions with alcohol and tobacco.
- This information is an educational aid only. It is not intended as medical advice for individual conditions or treatments. Talk to your healthcare provider before following any medical regimen to see if it is safe and effective for you.
- This document contains interaction information only. If you would like other information about this supplement, such as correct dose or side effects, talk to your healthcare provider.

**INTERACTIONS WITH:**

**PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE:**

**The following medicines used to treat human immunodeficiency virus (HIV):**

Amprenavir (Agenerase®), Indinavir (Crixivan®), Nelfinavir (Viracept®), Ritonavir (Norvir®), Saquinavir (Invirase®), Delavirdine (Rescriptor®), Efavirenz (Sustiva®), Nevirapine (Viramune®), Stavudine (Zerit®)

**HARMFUL EFFECT:**

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT may make the medicine used to treat HIV not work for you.
- This interaction has been reported when ST. JOHN'S WORT and INDINAVIR were taken together, and when ST. JOHN'S WORT and NEVIRAPINE were taken together, and might also occur with other drugs used to treat HIV listed above.

**PROOF:**

- This interaction has been reported in people (6, 19).

#### WHAT TO DO:

- Talk to your doctor before taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and medicines to treat HIV together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and HIV medicine together may be harmful. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and HIV medicine together, call your doctor. You may need to stop taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and have your blood tested to make sure your medicine used to treat HIV is working.

#### **The following medicines to treat asthma:**

Theophylline (Aerolate®, Bronkodyl®, Slo-Phyllin®, Slo-Bid(TM), Theobid®, Theochron®, Theo-Dur®, Theolair(TM), Uni-Dur®, Uniphyl®)

#### HARMFUL EFFECT:

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT may interfere with the actions of THEOPHYLLINE to treat asthma resulting in the return of symptoms otherwise controlled by prescription medicines.

#### PROOF:

- This interaction has been reported in people (5).

#### WHAT TO DO:

- Talk to your doctor before taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and THEOPHYLLINE together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and THEOPHYLLINE together may be harmful. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and THEOPHYLLINE together, call your doctor right away.

#### **The following birth control pills:**

Ethinyl Estradiol/Desogestrel (Desogen®, Mircette®, Ortho-Cept®); Ethinyl Estradiol/Ethinodiol Diacetate (Demulen®, Zovia®); Ethinyl Estradiol/Levonorgestrel (Alesse®, Levlen®, Levora®, Tri-Levlen®, Triphasil®); Ethinyl Estradiol/Norethindrone (Brevicon®, Estrostep®, Loestrin® 1.5/30, Loestrin® 1/20, Modicon®, Necon® 1/35, Necon® 0.5/35, Nelova® 1/35E, Nelova® 0.5/35E, Norinyl® 1+35, Ortho-Novum® 1/35, Ortho-Novum® 7/7/7, Ortho-Novum® 10/11, Ovcon®-35, Tri-Norinyl®); Ethinyl Estradiol/Norgestimate (Ortho-Cyclen®, Ortho Tri-Cyclen®); Ethinyl Estradiol/Norgestrel (Lo/Ovral®, Ovral®); Mestranol/Norethindrone (Genora® 1/50, Necon® 1/50, Nelova® 1/50M, Norinyl® 1+50, Ortho-Novum® 1/50)

#### HARMFUL EFFECT:

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT may interfere with the action of birth control pills resulting in breakthrough bleeding, and possible a loss of contraception and unplanned pregnancy.

#### PROOF:

- This interaction has been reported in people (13,14).

#### WHAT TO DO:

- Talk to your doctor before taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and birth control pills together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and birth control pills may result in breakthrough bleeding, and possibly loss of contraception and unplanned pregnancy. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and birth control pills together, contact your doctor. Your doctor may tell you to use another type of birth

control.

**The following immune suppressing medicine:**

Cyclosporine (Sandimmune®, Neoral®); Sirolimus (Rapamune®); Tacrolimus (Prograf®)

**HARMFUL EFFECT:**

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT may make the immune suppressing medicine not work for you. This is especially important for patients taking immune suppressing medicine to keep their bodies from rejecting a transplanted organ.
- This interaction was reported when ST. JOHN'S WORT and CYCLOSPORINE were taken together and might also occur with other immune suppressing medicine listed above (10).

**PROOF:**

- This interaction has been reported in people (7).

**WHAT TO DO:**

- Talk to your doctor before taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and immune suppressing medicine together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and immune suppressing medicine together may be harmful. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and immune suppressing medicine together, call your doctor right away. You may need extra blood tests to measure how much medicine is in your blood and the dose of the medicine you take may need to be changed.

**The following medicines to treat depression:**

Amitriptyline (Elavil®, Enovil®); Citalopram (Celexa®); Clomipramine (Anafranil®); Desipramine (Norpramin®); Fluoxetine (Prozac®); Fluvoxamine (Luvox®); Imipramine (Janimine®, Tofranil®); Nefazodone (Serzone®); Nortriptyline (Aventyl® Hydrochloride, Pamelor®); Paroxetine (Paxil®); Protriptyline (Vivactil®); Sertraline (Zoloft®); Trazodone (Desyrel®); Venlafaxine (Effexor®)

**HARMFUL EFFECT:**

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and medicines for depression together may result in headaches, trouble sleeping, dizziness, upset stomach, diarrhea, muscle weakness, and feeling shaky. This combination may also result in the return of symptoms of depression.
- This interaction has been reported when ST. JOHN'S WORT and PAROXETINE or SERTRALINE were taken together and might also occur with other drugs in this class listed above.

**PROOF:**

- This interaction has been reported in people (1-3).

**WHAT TO DO:**

- You should not take ST. JOHN'S WORT and medicine to treat depression together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and medicines for depression together may be harmful. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and medicines for depression together and have headaches, trouble sleeping, dizziness, upset stomach, diarrhea, muscle weakness, feeling shaky, or a return of symptoms of depression, call your doctor right away.

**The following heart medicine:**

Digitoxin (Crystodigin®); Digoxin (Lanoxicaps®, Lanoxin®)

**HARMFUL EFFECT:**

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT may make your heart medicine not work for you.

**PROOF:**

- An interaction with DIGOXIN and ST. JOHN'S WORT has been reported in people (4).

**WHAT TO DO:**

- Talk to your doctor before taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and heart medicine together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and heart medicine together may be harmful. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and heart medicine together and have chest pain, high blood pressure, headaches, fast or skipped heartbeats, or any change in your heart condition, call your doctor right away.

**The following medicine used for weight loss:**

Fenfluramine (Pondimin®)

**HARMFUL EFFECT:**

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and FENFLURAMINE together may result in headaches, trouble sleeping, dizziness, upset stomach, diarrhea, muscle weakness, and feeling shaky.

**PROOF:**

- This interaction has been reported in people (15).

**WHAT TO DO:**

- Talk to your doctor before taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and FENFLURAMINE together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and FENFLURAMINE together may result in headaches, trouble sleeping, dizziness, upset stomach, diarrhea, muscle weakness, and feeling shaky. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and FENFLURAMINE together and have headaches, trouble sleeping, dizziness, upset stomach, diarrhea, muscle weakness, or are feeling shaky, contact your doctor.

**Medicines which cause the skin to be sensitive to sunlight:**

**HARMFUL EFFECT:**

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and medicines which cause the skin to be sensitive to sunlight together may result in more risk of skin burns.

**PROOF:**

- This interaction has been reported in people (17).

**WHAT TO DO:**

- Ask your doctor if you are taking any medications which could cause your skin to be sensitive to sunlight. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and medicines which cause the skin to be sensitive to sunlight together may increase your chance of sunburns. Use sunscreen and limit your exposure to sunlight and artificial sunlight (tanning beds). If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and medicines which cause the skin to be sensitive to sunlight together and have signs of a burn, contact your doctor.

**The following medicines to treat cancer:**

Cyclophosphamide (Cytoxan®); Tamoxifen (Nolvadex®); Paclitaxel (Taxol®); Etoposide (Vepesid®), Vinblastine(Velban®, Velsar®), Vincristine (Oncovin®, Vincasar PFS®, Vincaxome®), Vindesine (Eldisine®)

**HARMFUL EFFECT:**

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT may interfere with the action of medicine used to treat cancer resulting in return of symptoms otherwise controlled by prescription medicines.

**PROOF:**

- This interaction has not been reported in people. Based upon the way that ST. JOHN'S WORT interacts with other medicines, it is thought that this interaction may be possible (10).

**WHAT TO DO:**

- Talk to your doctor before taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and cancer medicine together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and cancer medicine may result in the return of symptoms of cancer. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and cancer medicine together, contact your doctor.

**The following medicines to treat high blood pressure (called beta-blockers or calcium channel blockers):**

Acebutolol (Sectral®); Amlodipine (Norvasc®); Atenolol (Tenormin®); Bepridil (Vascor®); Betaxolol (Kerlone®); Bisoprolol (Zebeta®); Carteolol (Cartrol®); Diltiazem (Cardizem®, Cartia XT (TM), Dilacor XR®, Diltia XT (TM), Tiazac(TM)); Felodipine (Plendil®); Isradipine (Dynacirc®); Labetalol (Normodyne®, Trandate®); Metoprolol (Lopressor®, Toprol XL®); Nadolol (Corgard®); Nicardipine (Cardene®); Nifedipine (Adalat®, Adalat CC®, Procardia®, Procardia XL®); Penbutolol (Levatol®); Pindolol (Visken®); Propranolol (Inderal®); Sotalol (Betapace®); Timolol (Betimol®, Blocadren®); Verapamil (Calan®, Covera-HS®, Isoptin®, Verelan®)

**HARMFUL EFFECT:**

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT may interfere with the action of medicine used to treat high blood pressure resulting in return of symptoms otherwise controlled by prescription medicines.

**PROOF:**

- This interaction has not been reported in people. Based upon the way that ST. JOHN'S WORT interacts with other medicines, it is thought that this interaction may be possible (10).

**WHAT TO DO:**

- Talk to your doctor before taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and blood pressure medicine together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and blood pressure medicine may result in return of high blood pressure. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and blood pressure medicine together, contact your doctor.

**The following medicines to treat depression or Parkinson's disease:**

Isocarboxazid (Marplan®); Moclobemide (Manerix®); Phenelzine (Nardil®); Selegiline (Deprenyl®, Eldepryl®); Tranylcypromine (Parnate®)

**HARMFUL EFFECT:**

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and these medicines together may cause headaches, trouble sleeping, dizziness, upset stomach, diarrhea, muscle weakness, feeling shaky, or a return of symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

**PROOF:**

- This interaction has not been reported in people but is possible based on ingredients present in ST. JOHN'S WORT (11,12).

**WHAT TO DO:**

- You should not take ST. JOHN'S WORT and any of these medicines together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and these medicines together may be harmful. You should wait at least 2 weeks after stopping ST. JOHN'S WORT before starting any medicine listed above. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and these medicines together and have headaches, trouble sleeping, dizziness, upset stomach, diarrhea, muscle weakness, feeling shaky, or a return of symptoms of Parkinson's disease, call your doctor right away.

**The following medicines used to control seizures:**

Carbamazepine (Carbatrol®, Epitol®, Tegretol®); Phenytoin (Dilantin®, Diphenylan Sodium®); Phenobarbital (Barbita®, Luminal®)

**HARMFUL EFFECT:**

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT may make the medicine used to control seizures not work well for you, or may cause more side effects.

**PROOF:**

- An interaction with ST. JOHN'S WORT and CARBAMAZEPINE has been reported in people (20).

**WHAT TO DO:**

- Talk to your doctor before taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and seizure medicine together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and seizure medicine may result in return of seizures, or may cause more side effects such as dizziness, nausea, or drowsiness. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and seizure medicine together, contact your doctor.

**The following medicines to treat migraine headaches:**

Naratriptan (Amerge®), Rizatriptan (Maxalt-MLT®), Sumatriptan (Imitrex®), Zolmitriptan (Zomig®)

**HARMFUL EFFECT:**

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and medicines for depression together may result in headaches, trouble sleeping, dizziness, upset stomach, diarrhea, muscle weakness, and feeling shaky.

**PROOF:**

- This interaction has not been reported in people. Based upon the way that ST. JOHN'S WORT interacts with other medicines, it is thought that this interaction may be possible.

**WHAT TO DO:**

- Talk to your doctor before taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and medicine to treat migraine headaches

together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and these medicines may result in headaches, trouble sleeping, dizziness, upset stomach, diarrhea, muscle weakness, and feeling shaky. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and these medicines together and have headaches, trouble sleeping, dizziness, upset stomach, diarrhea, muscle weakness, or are feeling shaky, contact your doctor.

**The following medicines used for sleep, migraine headache, seizures, or muscle relaxants:**

Amobarbital (Amytal®); Aprobarbital (Alurate®); Butabarbital (Butalan®); Butalbital (Amaphen®, Esgic®, Fioricet®, Fiorinal®, Fiortal®, Phrenilin®, Sedapap®); Mephobarbital (Mebaral®); Methohexital (Brevital® Sodium); Pentobarbital (Nembutal®); Phenobarbital (Barbita®, Luminal®); Secobarbital (Seconal®); Thiopental (Pentothal® Sodium)

**HARMFUL EFFECT:**

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and any of the medicines listed may result in return of symptoms which were controlled by the medicine.

**PROOF:**

- This interaction has been reported in animals, but how it affects people is unclear (18).

**WHAT TO DO:**

- Talk to your doctor before taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and medicines used for sleep, migraine headache, seizures, or muscle relaxants together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and these medicines together may be harmful. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and any of these medicines together and have a return of symptoms which were controlled by the medicine, contact your doctor.

**The following medicines used for sleep or anxiety:**

Alprazolam (Xanax®); Chlordiazepoxide (Libritabs®, Librium®); Clonazepam (Klonopin®); Clorazepate (Gen-Xene®, Tranxene®); Diazepam (Diastat®, Dizac®, Valium®); Flurazepam (Dalmane®); Halazepam (Paxipam®); Lorazepam (Ativan®); Midazolam (Versed®); Oxazepam (Serax®); Prazepam (Centrax®); Temazepam (Restoril®); Triazolam (Halcion®)

**HARMFUL EFFECT:**

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and any of the medicines listed may result in return of symptoms which were controlled by the medicine.

**PROOF:**

- This interaction has been reported in animals, but how it affects people is unclear (18).

**WHAT TO DO:**

- Talk to your doctor before taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and medicines used for sleep or anxiety together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and these medicines together may be harmful. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and any of these medicines together and have a return of symptoms which were controlled by the medicine, contact your doctor.

**NONPRESCRIPTION (OVER-THE-COUNTER) MEDICINE:**

**The following medicine used for diarrhea:**

## Loperamide (Imodium®)

### HARMFUL EFFECT:

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and LOPERAMIDE together may result in confusion or agitation.

### PROOF:

- This interaction has been reported in people (16).

### WHAT TO DO:

- Talk to your doctor before taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and LOPERAMIDE together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and LOPERAMIDE together may result in confusion or agitation. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and LOPERAMIDE together and feel confused or agitated, contact your doctor.

## DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS:

### The following mineral:

Iron

### HARMFUL EFFECT:

- Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and IRON together may reduce the absorption of IRON. This interaction has been reported when herbal teas containing tannins and IRON were taken together.

### PROOF:

- This interaction has been reported in people with similar herbal teas (8,9).

### WHAT TO DO:

- Talk to your doctor before taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and IRON together. Taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and IRON together may be harmful. If you are already taking ST. JOHN'S WORT and IRON together and are tired, look pale or crave ice, call your doctor.

## FOOD:

At the time this document was written, no interactions between ST. JOHN'S WORT and food were found.

## ALCOHOL:

At the time this document was written, no interactions between ST. JOHN'S WORT and alcohol were found.

## TOBACCO:

At the time this document was written, no interactions between ST. JOHN'S WORT and tobacco were found.

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