



## Herbal Supplements ?

by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

Q: My pharmacist recommended Kava Kava for my anxiety and depression. What do you think?

A: I am so glad you asked. That tells me that you're willing to do a little research to be sure you stay safe and healthy. While I use, and benefit from, certain over the counter herbs and supplements myself, I do so only with advice from both my physician and a master herbalist, extremely knowledgeable about herbal preparations, various brands, and me.

There are people who have used, and praised, Kava Kava, but others express concerns about it, including liver toxicity. St. John's Wort, Echinacea, and other widely popular herbs and supplements also have drawn warnings, as well as praise. For example, people take Echinacea hoping to boost the Immune System. But if someone has any form of autoimmune activity going on, by increasing the immune system they may actually exacerbate their disease process. While some cancer survivors do well on high doses of some vitamins as directed by their doctors, there are also reports that in some cases vitamins may actually serve as "fertilizer" for the cancer cells, increasing the proliferation.

Some over-the-counter preparations can be wonderful in some cases, but exactly as with prescription medications, professional medical advice and high quality formulae are essential. Because in the U.S. OTC supplements are not regulated nor necessarily manufactured in sterile pharmaceutical grade labs, there have been studies demonstrating inconsistent and/or impure ingredients.

Your final decision should be made by a licensed health care professional who knows your history, everything else you are taking, your personal allergies or sensitivities, and the reason you are seeking medication for anxiety or depression. They must also be well-acquainted with all the biochemical effects a particular supplement might have, not just on "anyone" but on you. (S)he also needs to monitor and make dosage adjustments as needed over time, based upon your response to the preparations.

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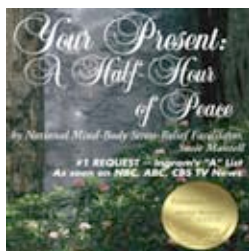
(2002) "A couple of weeks ago, we alerted our readers to a recent study from the Journal of the American Medical Association underlining the potential problems of unsupervised use of herbal and other dietary supplements. We noted that at least some of these products could potentially interact with prescription and other pharmaceuticals — with unforeseen adverse effects on consumers. In addition, the products themselves are not closely regulated in this country, and safe or effective dosages are not necessarily known."

[http://www.acsh.org/factsfears/newsID.142/news\\_detail.asp](http://www.acsh.org/factsfears/newsID.142/news_detail.asp)

**Remember: "All Natural" does not in any way ensure that you are not allergic or sensitive to any substance nor that it cannot harm you. Arsenic is "all natural" too.**

While it is wonderful that we have so many integrative and effective alternatives to support traditional Western medicine, I have great concerns about how quick people are to take botanical medical preparations or nutritional supplements without full information, and follow-up monitoring. Kava may be just the right thing for you, or it may not be. Keep reading and talking with professionals who can help and supervise whatever course you choose. If anxiety is the problem, take a look around my website at [www.relaxintuit.com](http://www.relaxintuit.com) for other stress-tips, and see what else might be beneficial for you at [www.relaxintuit.com](http://www.relaxintuit.com)

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## END OF THIS TIP##