



## Preventing Food-Drug Interactions

Food and drugs sometimes do not mix. To prevent bad side effects when you take medicine -

- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about how your medicine may be affected by what you eat or drink
- Read the information about a drug from the pharmacy or company that makes the drug
- Look for warnings on the label of the drug about food or drink

Always take all your medicines to your doctor's visits. Talk about whether they might interact with food or drink. Include drugs you buy off the shelf as well as vitamin-mineral supplements and herbal medicines.

- ☞ Make sure all your doctors and pharmacists know about all the medicines and supplements you take.
- ☞ Find out if you should take a drug with food or milk or on an empty stomach.
- ☞ Never mix drugs into food or drink unless your doctor or pharmacist recommends it.
- ☞ Take pills and capsules with 8 ounces of water.

**Take no medicines with alcohol.** Only drink alcohol while on a drug with your doctor's permission.

Ask whether any of your drugs are affected by grapefruit or grapefruit juice. Grapefruit can make some drugs be absorbed to toxic levels or make other drugs not work.

If you are on diuretics or water pills, ask your doctor about whether you should eat foods high in potassium. Some diuretics make you retain potassium while others make you lose potassium. Too much or too little potassium is dangerous.

If you are on Coumadin, eat foods high in Vitamin K in consistent, small amounts. These foods include leafy green vegetables like turnip greens, broccoli, brussel sprouts, spinach and kale and cauliflower. To learn more, go to [www.fcs.uga.edu/extension/links.html](http://www.fcs.uga.edu/extension/links.html) and click on the link “Coumadin and Vitamin K” under the Nutrition and Health section.

Do not use dairy foods or take iron supplements with the antibiotic, tetracycline.

Do not mix MOA inhibitors used for depression with foods high in tyramine. Your blood pressure may get too high and cause a stroke or heart attack. Foods high in tyramine are

- ☹ beer
- ☹ red wine
- ☹ other alcohol
- ☹ game meat
- ☹ miso soup
- ☹ banana
- ☹ ginseng
- ☹ soy sauce
- ☹ food and drink with caffeine like colas, chocolate, tea or coffee
- ☹ cheddar, bleu, American, brie, mozzarella, Parmesan cheese
- ☹ liver
- ☹ cured meat and sausages
- ☹ caviar and dried fish
- ☹ avocado
- ☹ sauerkraut
- ☹ fava or broad beans

For more information contact -  
The National Consumer League for  
their publication ***Food and Drug Interactions***.  
Call 202-835-0747 or go to  
[www.nclnet.org/brochures.html](http://www.nclnet.org/brochures.html)  
and click on the title.

Also avoid caffeine when you take drugs for anxiety or for heart burn and esophageal reflux. They will not work as well.

Connie Crawley, MS, RD, LD, Extension Nutrition and Health Specialist

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating. The Cooperative Extension Service and the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences offer educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability.

An Equal Opportunity Employer/Affirmative Action Organization  
Committed to a Diverse Work Force