

The Epilepsy Society of Southern New York wants you to know that certain herbs, supplements and alternative medicines can cause or worsen seizures and may interact with your medications. Before taking any herb, supplement or alternative medicine, clear it with your doctor. **The information in this chart is for educational purposes only and is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice.**

Item	Seizure Potential
Asa Foetida	Seizures possible in susceptible individuals. <sup>3</sup>
Aspartame (saccharin)	Associated with seizures when used in doses >34 mg/kg body weight or in patients with PKU, an inherited blood disorder. <sup>1</sup>
Bearberry (uva ursi)	May cause seizures. <sup>1</sup>
Betal Nuts	Seizure has been reported with high doses. <sup>5</sup>
Black Cohosh	One seizure case reported. <sup>1</sup> Should be used cautiously in patients with history of seizure disorder. <sup>5</sup>
Black Tea	Seizure has been reported with caffeine overdose. <sup>5</sup>
Boron	Seizures have been reported with boron toxicity. Chronic boron exposure may cause seizures. <sup>5</sup>
Clove	When taken orally in large doses, in undiluted oil form, or clove cigarettes, side effects may include seizures. <sup>5</sup>
Coffee / Caffeine	Caution is advised with large quantities of caffeine / coffee for persons with higher disposition to seizures. <sup>3</sup>
Colloidal Silver	Side effects from use may include seizures. <sup>6</sup>
Copper	Toxicity may lead to a seizure. <sup>5</sup>
Creatine	Seizures may occur. <sup>5</sup>
Damiana	Lowers seizure threshold. <sup>2</sup> Report of tetanus-like seizures. <sup>3</sup>
Ephedra ( <i>N-methyl</i> ephedrine, pseudo-ephedrine, and phenyl-propamine)	May cause or worsen seizures. <sup>1</sup>
Ergot	Overdose can lead to seizures. <sup>3</sup>
Eucalyptus	Seizures are possible when oil is taken orally. <sup>5</sup>
European Water Hemlock	Symptoms of poisoning include severe tonic-clonic seizures. <sup>3</sup>
Evening Primrose Oil	May lower seizure threshold. Has the potential to manifest temporal lobe epilepsy. <sup>3</sup>
Ginkgo Biloba	May reduce seizure threshold. Seizures and coma have occurred after ingestion of Ginkgo seeds. <sup>3</sup>
Ginseng	May lower seizure threshold. <sup>2</sup>
Goldenseal/berberine	May lower seizure threshold. <sup>2</sup> Overdose may lead to seizures. <sup>3</sup>
Green Tea	May lower seizure threshold if more than 3 cups per day are consumed. <sup>2</sup> Seizures have been reported with overdose. <sup>5</sup>
Guarana (caffeine and theophylline)	May lower seizure threshold. <sup>2</sup>
Histalet Forte (caffeine, phenyl-propranolamine and pseudoephedrine)	One case of repeated generalized seizures within 30 minutes of ingestion. <sup>1</sup>
Jaborandi/pilocarpine	Poisoning from pilocarpine eye drops can cause seizures. <sup>3</sup>
Juniper Oil	Reported to induce seizures. <sup>7</sup>
Kava Kava	Generalized tonic/clonic seizures from toxicity and acute withdrawal. <sup>2</sup>
MaHuang (ephedrine and pseudoephedrine)	Reported to cause seizures. <sup>1</sup>
Melatonin	May lead to increased or decreased seizure activity. <sup>4</sup>
Metabolife 356	Seizures reported. <sup>2</sup> May cause temporal lobe epilepsy. <sup>3</sup>
Molybdenum	One report of seizures from acute clinical poisoning. <sup>4</sup>
Monkshood	May cause seizures. <sup>1</sup>
Oleander	Eating the leaves, flower, or bark of common oleander may cause seizures. <sup>5</sup>
Pennyroyal Oil	Toxicity may cause seizures. <sup>5</sup>
Phen-fen (mahuang and ephedrine)	Lowers seizure threshold. <sup>2</sup>
Phosphates	Excessive intake can cause seizures. <sup>5</sup>
Sage	Extended intake or overdose can cause seizures. <sup>3</sup>
Starflower / Borage	May lower seizure threshold. <sup>2</sup>
St. John's Wort	Seizures reported. <sup>2</sup>
Thuja Oil	Causes seizures and in high doses leads to tonic-clonic seizures. <sup>3</sup>
Uva Ursi (see Bearberry)	Reported to cause seizures. <sup>1</sup>
Water-Hemlock	One case of seizures reported. <sup>1</sup>
Wormwood	May lower seizure threshold. <sup>3</sup>
Yohimbe	Reported to cause seizures. <sup>1</sup> May change seizure threshold <sup>5</sup>

References:

1. "Herbal Remedies, Dietary Supplements, and Seizures", A. Tyagi & N. Delanty, *Epilepsia*, Vol. 44 No. 2, 2003, pp. 228-235.
2. "MINCEP Medical Alert: Don't Mix These!" MINCEP Epilepsy Care, [www.mincep.com/herbs](http://www.mincep.com/herbs), 2005
3. *PDR for Herbal Medicines*, Medical Economics, Montvale, NJ, Third Edition, 2004
4. *PDR for Nutritional Supplement*, Medical Economics, Montvale, NJ, 2001
5. MedlinePlus: [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html)
6. National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine [www.nccam.nih.gov/health/alerts/silver/silver.pdf](http://www.nccam.nih.gov/health/alerts/silver/silver.pdf)
7. "Toxins And Drugs Reported To Induce Seizures," BS Koppel, [www.epilepsy.com/professionals](http://www.epilepsy.com/professionals)

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<b>If you're taking this anti-seizure drug –Brand (generic):</b>	<b>...be sure to talk to your doctor before taking any of these herbs, supplements or alternative medicines:</b>
Depakote (divalproex sodium) / Depakene (valproic acid)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba <sup>1</sup> ; Kava Kava, Starflower (Borage), Yohimbe <sup>2</sup> ; Chaparral, Niacin <sup>4</sup>
Diastat Rectal Delivery System, Diazepam Intensol, Valium (diazepam)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Starflower (Borage) <sup>1</sup> ; Kava Kava <sup>2</sup> ; Melatonin, <sup>3</sup> ; Bitter Almond, Bromelain, Calendula, Chamomile, Danshen, Eucalyptus Oil, Lactobacillus Acidophilus, Niacin, Polypodium <sup>4</sup>
Dilantin (phenytoin)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Mentat, Peony Root (paeoniae radix), Shankpushpi, Starflower (Borage) <sup>1</sup> ; St. John's Wort <sup>2</sup> ; Piperine,; Horse Chestnut <sup>4</sup> , Vitamin B6 <sup>3,4</sup>
Felbatol (felbamate)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba Starflower (Borage) <sup>1</sup>
Gabitril (tiagabine)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Starflower (Borage) <sup>1</sup> ; Red Yeast <sup>4</sup>
Keppra (levetiracetam)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Starflower (Borage) <sup>1</sup>
Klonopin (clonazepam)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Starflower (Borage) <sup>1</sup> ; Kava Kava, <sup>2</sup>
Lamictal (lamotrigine)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Starflower (Borage) <sup>1</sup>
Lyrica (pregabalin)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Starflower (Borage) <sup>1</sup>
(phenobarbital)	Eucalyptus Oil, Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Pyrrolizidine (Comfrey)*, Starflower (Borage), Thujone (from wormwood, sage) <sup>1</sup> ; Kava Kava <sup>2</sup> ; Bitter Almond, Black Tea, Bromelain, Calendula, Chamomile, Green Tea, Polypodium <sup>4</sup> ; Mega doses of Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine) <sup>3,4</sup>
Mysoline (primidone)	Eucalyptus Oil, Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Pyrrolizidine (Comfrey)*, Starflower (Borage), Thujone (from wormwood, sage) <sup>1</sup> ; Kava Kava <sup>2</sup> ; Bitter Almond, Black Tea, Bromelain, Calendula, Chamomile, Green Tea, Polypodium <sup>4</sup> ; Mega doses of Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine) <sup>3,4</sup>
Neurontin (gabapentin)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Starflower (Borage) <sup>1</sup> ; Red Yeast <sup>4</sup>
Tegretol, Carbatrol (carbamazepine)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Grapefruit Juice, Mentat, Septilin, Sho-Seiryu-to, Starflower (Borage) <sup>1</sup> ; Psyllium, Yohimbe <sup>2</sup> ; Vitamin C w/grapefruit flavonoids <sup>3</sup> ; Black Tea, Green Tea, Niacin, Psyllium, St. John's Wort <sup>4</sup>
Topamax (topiramate)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Starflower (Borage) <sup>1</sup>
Tranxene (clorazepate)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Starflower (Borage) <sup>1</sup> ; Kava Kava, <sup>2</sup>
Trileptal (oxcarbazepine)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Starflower (Borage) <sup>1</sup> ; Kava Kava, <sup>2</sup>
Zarontin (ethosuximide)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Starflower (Borage) <sup>1</sup> ; Kava Kava, <sup>2</sup>
Zonegran (zonisamide)	Evening Primrose, Ginkgo Biloba, Starflower (Borage) <sup>1</sup> ; Kava Kava, <sup>2</sup>

\* Potentially Fatal Interaction.



References

1. "Herbal Remedies, Dietary Supplements, and Seizures", A. Tyagi & N. Delanty, *Epilepsia*, Vol. 44 No. 2, 2003, pp. 228-235.
2. *PDR For Herbal Medicines*, Medical Economics, Montvale, NJ, Third Edition, 2004
3. *PDR For Nutritional Supplements*, Medical Economics, Montvale, NJ, 2001.
4. MedlinePlus: [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html)