

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

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Memorial Sloan Kettering  
Cancer Center

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## What is it?

Asian ginseng is an herb used in traditional Chinese medicine. It also comes as capsules, softgels, tablets, and liquid extracts.

## What are the potential uses and benefits?

Asian ginseng is used to:

- Boost the immune system.
- Increase strength and stamina.
- Treat diabetes.
- Treat erectile dysfunction (ED, trouble getting or keeping an erection).

Asian ginseng has other uses, but doctors have not studied them to see if they work.

Talk with your healthcare providers before taking Asian ginseng supplements. They can interact with some medications and affect how they work. For more information, read the “What else do I need to know?” section below.

## What are the side effects?

Side effects of using Asian ginseng may include:

- Dry mouth
- Fast heart rate
- Nausea (feeling like you’re going to throw up)
- Vomiting (throwing up)
- Diarrhea (loose or watery bowel movements)
- Insomnia (trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking up too early)
- Nervousness

## What else do I need to know?

- Talk with your healthcare provider if you’re taking blood thinners such as warfarin (Coumadin<sup>®</sup>, Jantoven<sup>®</sup>). Asian ginseng may increase your risk of bleeding.
- Talk with your healthcare provider if you’re taking imatinib (Gleevec<sup>®</sup>). Asian ginseng may increase the risk of liver damage.
- Talk with your healthcare provider if you’re taking raltegravir (Isentress<sup>®</sup>, Isentress<sup>®</sup> HD). Asian ginseng may increase the risk of liver damage.
- Talk with your healthcare provider if you’re on insulin. Asian ginseng may lower your blood sugar to harmful levels.
- Asian ginseng should not be confused with herbs such as American ginseng, Siberian ginseng, or *Panax notoginseng*. These herbs are not the same as Asian ginseng.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

Ginseng (Asian) - Last updated on November 15, 2022

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