

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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The root of the astragalus plant is used in traditional Chinese medicine to increase stamina and strength. You can also take astragalus as a supplement to strengthen your immune system and decrease fatigue (feeling more weak than usual).

What are the potential uses and benefits?

Astragalus is used to:

- Strengthen your immune system
- Increase stamina and strength
- Reduce nausea (feeling like you're going to throw up) and vomiting (throwing up) caused by chemotherapy
- Reduce cancer-related fatigue

Talk with your healthcare provider before taking astragalus 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?

The side effects below were reported in a study, but lasted only 24 hours:

- Fatigue (feeling more weak than usual)
- Headache
- Low blood pressure

What else do I need to know?

- Talk to your healthcare provider if you’re on blood thinners such as warfarin (Jantoven® or Coumadin®). Astragalus can increase your risk of bleeding.
- Talk to your healthcare provider if you’re taking immunosuppressants (medications that weaken your immune system). Astragalus can make them less effective.
- Talk to your healthcare provider if you’re taking medications to lower your blood pressure. Astragalus by itself can lower blood pressure. Taking these together can bring down your blood pressure to unhealthy levels.
- Talk to your healthcare provider if you’re on diuretics (water pills). Astragalus may increase their effects.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you’re not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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