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What is it?

Chaga mushroom is a type of fungus that's commonly found on birch trees in cold climates. It's used in folk medicine for various ailments across northern Europe. Chaga mushrooms are edible but because of their bitter taste, most people drink chaga mushroom as a tea.

Chaga mushroom supplements come as tablets, capsules, or powders.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

Chaga mushroom is used to:

- Boost the immune system
- Reduce inflammation (swelling)

Chaga also has other uses that haven't been studied by doctors to see if they work.

It's generally safe to eat chaga mushroom and drink it as a tea. But talk with your healthcare providers before taking chaga supplements. Herbal supplements are stronger than the herbs you would use in cooking. They can also 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?

- There aren't any reports of side effects from using chaga mushroom.

What else do I need to know?

- Talk with your healthcare provider if you're taking blood thinners such as warfarin (Coumadin[®], Jantoven[®]). Chaga mushroom may increase your risk of bleeding.

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 to search our virtual library.

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