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Cancer Center

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Chamomile is an herb used in traditional medicine for its relaxing and calming effects. It's mostly taken as herbal tea. You can also take chamomile capsules or tablets.

## What are the potential uses and benefits?

Chamomile is used to:

- Lower stress
- Treat insomnia (trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking up too early)
- Lower anxiety (strong feelings of worry or fear)
- Treat depression
- Treat mouth sores from cancer treatment
- Treat upset stomach and diarrhea ((loose or watery bowel movements)

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

It's generally safe to take chamomile in the form of tea, but talk with your healthcare providers before taking chamomile 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?

You are more likely to have allergic reactions to chamomile if you're allergic to plants related to chamomile such as ragweed,

chrysanthemums, marigolds, or daisies. Allergic reactions can include:

- Asthma (respiratory condition which makes it difficult to breathe)
- Contact dermatitis (red, itchy rash)
- Anaphylaxis (a serious allergic reaction)

## What else do I need to know?

- Don't take chamomile if you're allergic to ragweed or flowers in the sunflower family.
- Talk to your healthcare provider if you're taking blood thinners such as warfarin (Coumadin<sup>®</sup>, Jantoven<sup>®</sup>). Chamomile may increase your risk of bruising or bleeding.

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](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

Chamomile - Last updated on May 27, 2022

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