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L-theanine is a chemical found in both green and black tea. It helps you relax by lowering stress and anxiety (strong feelings of worry or fear).

L-theanine supplements come as tablets, capsules, chewables, liquids, and powders.

## What are the potential uses and benefits?

L-theanine is used to:

- Improve sleep quality
- Reduce anxiety
- Prevent cancer
- Lower your risk of getting a stroke (when there is no blood flow to your brain)

L-theanine has other uses, but doctors have not studied them to see if they work.

L-theanine that you get from tea is safe. Talk with your healthcare provider before taking L-theanine supplements. They are stronger than the L-theanine you get from food. Supplements can also affect how some medications work. For more information, read the “What else do I need to know?” section below.

## What are the side effects?

Side effects have not been reported. But drinking too much tea may cause:

- Headaches
- Trouble staying asleep
- Nausea (feeling like you're going to throw up)
- Irritability
- Stomach pain

## What else do I need to know?

- Talk with your healthcare provider if you're taking medications that help you sleep such as lorazepam (Ativan<sup>®</sup>), diazepam (Valium<sup>®</sup>), or zolpidem (Ambien<sup>®</sup>). Taking these medications and L-theanine may increase drowsiness.
- Talk with your healthcare provider if you're pregnant or breastfeeding. L-theanine may not be safe for you.

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.

L-Theanine - Last updated on November 22, 2022



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