



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Butterbur

This information describes the common uses of Butterbur, how it works, and its possible side effects.

Tell your healthcare providers about any dietary supplements you're taking, such as herbs, vitamins, minerals, and natural or home remedies. This will help them manage your care and keep you safe.

What is it?

Butterbur extracts have been shown effective in the treatment of migraines and allergies.

Butterbur is an herb native to Europe, Southwestern Asia, and North Africa. It has been used to treat allergies, asthma, headache, and muscle spasms. Butterbur was shown in clinical studies to be effective for migraines, allergic rhinitis (inflammation of the mucus membranes of nose marked by runny nose, congestion, itching, and sneezing) and asthma.

Butterbur contains compounds known as pyrrolizidine alkaloids that can cause liver toxicity.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- **Allergic rhinitis**

Butterbur was shown to have benefits for allergic rhinitis.

- **Migraine**

Current evidence indicates that butterbur extract is effective against migraine.

- **Asthma**

A few studies showed that butterbur may benefit those with asthma.

What else do I need to know?

Do Not Take if:

- You are hypersensitive to butterbur.
- You have liver disease or dysfunction because some compounds present in butterbur can be damaging to the liver.

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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