



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Cordyceps

This information describes the common uses of Cordyceps, 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?

Cordyceps is a fungus that grows on the caterpillar of a moth. It is used in traditional Chinese medicine. Cordyceps supplements come as capsules, powders, and liquid extracts.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

Cordyceps is used to:

- Boost your immune system
- Help your kidneys work better

- Boost strength and stamina

Cordyceps has other uses, but doctors haven't studied them to see if they work.

Talk with your healthcare providers before taking cordyceps supplements. Herbal supplements are stronger than the herbs you'd 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?

No major side effects have been reported.

What else do I need to know?

- Talk with your healthcare provider if you're taking insulin or another medication that lowers your blood sugar. Cordyceps can also lower blood sugar levels and may cause harm.
- Talk with your healthcare provider if you're taking a blood thinner, such as warfarin (Coumadin® and Jantoven®). Cordyceps may increase your risk of 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 to search our virtual library.

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