



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Green Tea

This information describes the common uses of Green Tea, 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?

Green tea is a drink made from the *Camellia sinensis* plant. Fresh leaves are cut from this plant and steamed to make the tea.

You can drink green tea or take it orally (by mouth) in a pill or tablet as a dietary supplement. You can also use green tea extract on your skin as a cream.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

Green tea is used to:

- Prevent heart disease
- Help lose weight

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

It's generally safe to drink green tea and use it in food. Talk with your healthcare providers before taking green tea supplements. Herbal supplements are stronger than the herbs you would use in cooking.

Supplements 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?

Side effects of taking green tea supplements may include:

- Nausea (feeling like you’re going to throw up)
- Stomach pain
- Drinking too much green tea can disrupt your sleep, and can also give you headaches

What else do I need to know?

- Talk to your doctor if you’re taking iron supplements. Green tea can affect the way iron is absorbed in the body.
- Don’t drink green tea if you’re pregnant or breastfeeding. Green tea has caffeine in it that may cause your baby to have trouble sleeping.
- Avoid drinking green tea if you have a stomach ulcer (sore in the lining of your stomach). Green tea may make your ulcer worse.
- Green tea may lower the risk of some types of cancers, but there is no clear evidence of its effectiveness.

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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