



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Guarana

This information describes the common uses of Guarana, 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?

Guarana comes from the seeds of the guarana plant. It is used in traditional medicine for many issues. The seeds have caffeine and other chemicals that are like caffeine in them.

Guarana supplements come as tablets, capsules, and powders.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

Guarana is used to:

- Make you less hungry
- Manage fatigue (feeling very tired or having less energy than usual)
- Increase sexual performance
- Increase your energy

Guarana also has other uses, but doctors have not studied them to see if they work.

It's generally safe to take small amounts of guarana. Talk with your healthcare provider before taking guarana 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 guarana may include:

- Nausea (feeling like you're going to throw up)
- Insomnia (trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking up too early)

Side effects of taking high amounts of guarana supplements may include:

- Vomiting (throwing up)
- Changes to your heartbeat
- High blood pressure
- Seizures (uncontrollable shaking)

What else do I need to know?

- Talk with your healthcare provider if you're taking stimulants. Guarana is also a stimulant so taking both at the same time may not be safe.
- Talk with your healthcare provider if you're taking blood thinners such as warfarin (Coumadin[®], Jantoven[®]). Guarana 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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