



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Maitake

This information describes the common uses of Maitake, 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?

Maitake is a fungus that has many nutrients. It's used to help with health issues in traditional Asian medicine.

It also comes as dietary supplements in capsules, powders, and liquid extracts.

## What are the potential uses and benefits?

Maitake is used to:

- Manage diabetes
- Lower high cholesterol levels
- Reduce high blood pressure
- Boost the immune system

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

It's generally safe to eat maitake in food. Talk with your healthcare provider before taking maitake 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 maitake may include:

- Higher white blood cell count

## What else do I need to know?

- Talk with your healthcare provider if you’re on blood thinners such as warfarin (Coumadin®, Jantoven®). Maitake can increase your risk of bleeding.
- Talk with your healthcare provider if you’re taking medications to lower your blood sugar. Maitake can also lower blood sugar so taking both at the same time may not be safe.

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.

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