



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Reishi Mushroom

This information describes the common uses of Reishi Mushroom, 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?

Reishi mushroom is used in many Asian countries to increase energy, boost the immune system, and for general health. Reishi supplements come as capsules, tablets, extracts, powders, and teas.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

Reishi mushroom is used to:

- Boost the immune system
- Increase strength and stamina
- Lower cholesterol
- Treat lower urinary tract symptoms (having to pee at night, weak urine flow, peeing more times than usual, and not being able to control urine flow) in males

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

Talk with your healthcare providers before taking reishi supplements. Herbal supplements are stronger than the herbs you would 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?

Side effects of reishi may include:

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

What else do I need to know?

- Talk to your healthcare provider if you’re on blood thinners such as warfarin (Coumadin®, Jantoven®). Reishi mushroom can increase your risk of bleeding.
- Talk to your healthcare provider if you’re on immunosuppressants. Reishi may not be safe for you.
- Talk to your healthcare provider if you’re taking reishi mushroom spore powder. It may increase the levels of a substance called CA72-4 in your body. This may show up on your test results and interfere with your cancer treatment.

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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