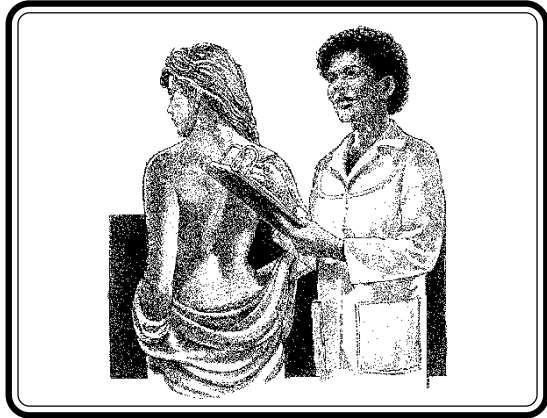


Your Health: Taking Control

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service • Oklahoma State University



DRUG - NUTRIENT INTERACTIONS

How Drugs and Nutrients Interact

Prescription and over-the-counter medications can affect the way your body uses nutrients in food. A drug-nutrient interaction refers to the effect of a medication on food or a nutrient in food. Medications interact with foods and nutrients in several ways.

- Medications can decrease appetite or change nutrient absorption, metabolism, or excretion.
- Certain dietary nutrients can change the absorption or metabolism of a medicine. Some nutrients can make medications work faster, slower, or even stop working at all.

Such interactions raise concerns that medications may lead to nutritional deficiencies or that a poor diet may change how a medicine works.

This does not mean that if you are taking a medication you need to use a vitamin/mineral supplement. There is little chance that taking a medication for a short time, such as a ten day treatment, will affect your nutritional health. However, use of some medications for months or years can affect your nutritional health.

Changing the diet to include more foods rich in vitamins and minerals is better than taking vitamin/mineral supplements. In fact excess vitamin/mineral supplements can change how a medication works.



Who Is At Risk?

Those considered at higher risk for drug-nutrient interactions include:

- persons who have a poor diet.
- persons who have serious health problems.
- growing children.
- pregnant women.
- older adults.
- persons taking two or more medications at the same time.
- persons using prescription and over-the-counter medications together.
- persons not following medication directions.
- persons taking medications for a long periods of time.
- persons who drink alcohol or smoke excessively.

Suggested Readings:

Oklahoma State University Extension Fact Sheets:

T-3120, *How Drugs and Nutrients Interact*

T-3149, *Nutrition In Later Years*

T-3122, *Vitamin and Mineral Supplements*

T-3165, *Food Guide Pyramid: Guide to Daily Food Choices*

Reference List:

Golshahr, V.E., Neubaue, D. & Sery, M.R. "Drug Facts and Comparisons." *Facts and Comparisons*, St. Louis, MO, 1996.

American Institute of Cancer Research. *Foods and Medicines That Don't Mix*. 1994

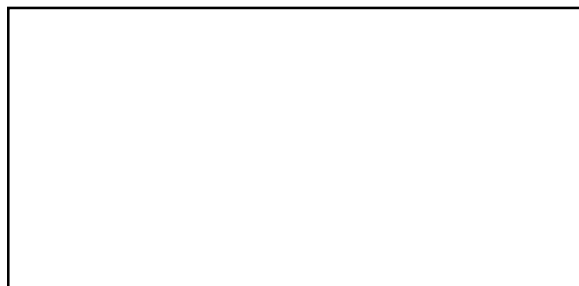
The Council on Family Health. *Medicine and You: A Guide For Older Americans*. 1993

US Department of Health and Human Services, "Drug-Nutrient Interactions." *The Surgeon General's Report On Nutrition and Health*, DHHS(PHS) Publication No. 88-50210, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1988.



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*This material is supported by the Oklahoma
Nutrition Education (ONE) Program through
the Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Food Stamp Program.*

Oklahoma State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture,
State and Local Governments cooperating. Oklahoma Coop-
erative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible
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