

HIV & Supplements: Your Guide to Making the Safe Choice

Supplement use is popular and the industry continues to grow as consumers show more interest.

Vitamin and mineral supplements play a role in the management of HIV, as the disease can put people at risk for nutritional deficiencies.

Herbal supplements are also popular in treating the side effects of medications, and may come in the form of loose tea leaves, raw herbs, or pills .

Before you add a supplement to your regimen, here is some information that may help you decide whether or not a supplement is safe or harmful.



Read the Resources

It is important to determine if your supplement information is reliable. This section will teach you how to distinguish reliable information from unreliable sources. We get supplement information from a number of different sources including friends, the internet, health food store employees, pharmacists, and physicians. While we assume everyone is working in our best interest, it is important to validate the source of the information. Here is some information to help you determine what a good source is.

What's a Good Source?

There are several things to consider when determining if the source of information is reliable.

1. *Who runs the site?* You should be able to easily find who is responsible for the information provided on the website.
2. *Who pays for the site?* Funding and sponsorship for websites should be clearly identified. The endings .gov, .edu, .org, and .com indicates who sponsors the site. Look for advertisements or company sponsorship. This can provide clues to the validity of the website's information. If funding is unclear, go to another site.

3. *What is the purpose of the site?* Look for an "About This Site" option on the home page and read its contents. This section should provide **clear** information about the website's purpose, and can allow you to judge the website's credibility.

4. *What is the basis of the information?* The site should describe the evidence to support the information provided. Information should be "*evidenced based*" and will reference scientific research. Watch out for testimonials, opinions, and unsupported claims. If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

5. *Is the information current?* Information should be reviewed and updated regularly. Outdated information can be misleading and dangerous. The most recent date of review should be clearly posted.

6. *Where is the contact information?* You should always be able to contact the site's owner if you have any questions. Avoid websites that don't provide a physical address, phone number, or other contact information.

Choosing a Better Supplement

1. *Safety considerations.* Talk to your health care provider about any supplement you are considering. Supplements may interact with other medications you are prescribed.



2. *Choose a product that has been tested.* The active ingredient in these products have been tested and assured to be found in the bottle.

3. *Read the instructions.* Make sure you are taking the correct amount. Speak to your health care provider if you have any questions, concerns, or experiencing **any** side effects.

4. *"Natural" does not mean "Safe."* Many naturally occurring herbs can still be harmful to the body.

5. *Herbal supplements contain*

many different compounds. The active ingredients in herbs may not be known. It is possible that what is on the label, may not be what is found in the container. Plant species vary as does the amount of the active ingredient. Supplements can easily be contaminated or not contain the ingredients on the label.

6. *Choose fresh, stable products.* Loose herbs can oxidize and as a result have harmful effects. Check the expiration date.

7. *Look for the ABC approval.* ABC stands for "American Botanical Council." ABC's mission is to provide education for the responsible use of herbal supplements.

8. *Consider the cost versus the benefit of each product.*

Check out these websites to look up safety and quality information for supplements and specific brands you are currently using or thinking about using:

www.consumerlabs.com

www.naturalstandard.com

nccam.nih.gov

www.herbmed.org

www.naturaldatabase.com

www.herbalgram.org

Herbs to AVOID with A.R.V's:

Betel nut	St. John's wort
Devil's claw	Guar gum
Ginseng	Valerian
Ginko biloba	Yohimbe
Kava kava	Echinacea

While this information may seem overwhelming, it's important to be aware of what you are taking and how it may help or harm you. You are now equipped with the right tools to choose the right supplement for you!

Sources

www.nccam.nih.gov

www.thebody.com

[Encyclopedia of Nutritional Supplements \(2001\)](#)

[Nursing: Herbal Medicine Handbook, 3rd ed. \(2006\)](#)

Spice of the Quarter: Clove



The use of cloves dates back to 207 B.C., when the ancient Chinese Han dynasty used it to relieve bad breath. Clove was first

introduced as a cooking spice in the 4th century A.D., with the start of commercial trading. The clove tree is native to the Spice Islands, located in Indonesia, but since the 19th century, cloves are grown in many different places with a tropical climate, including Tanzania, Jamaica, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, and Brazil.

In addition to spicing up your food, clove has been used by both traditional and Western medicine for different purposes. Scientific evidence has shown effective use of clove in relieving dental pain , though evidence is lacking for other medicinal uses.

Traditional uses for clove include abdominal pain, antibacterial, antifungal, antiseptic, diarrhea, diabetes, colic, high blood pressure, gout, inflammation, gas, bloating, ulcers, and parasites, among others. However, these uses have not been thoroughly tested in humans and safety and effectiveness have no always been proven for use of clove in these conditions. There is not enough evidence to recommend a specific dose for therapeutic purposes.

Clove is generally regarded as safe for use in the United States. However, if clove is taken by mouth in large doses, in its undiluted oil form, or used in clove cigarettes. Side effects may occur including vomiting, sore throat, seizure, difficulty breathing, blood disorders, liver damage or failure, and kidney failure. Clove or clove oil may also increase risk of bleeding. Therefore, caution should be taken by those taking medicines that increase risk of bleeding or blood-thinners (aspirin, Coumadin, Plavix, NSAIDs, and naproxen (Aleve)). Clove may also react with antifungals, anti-inflammatories, antihistamines, antineoplastics, and heart medications. Lastly, clove oil taken by mouth may lower blood sugar levels. Caution is advised when taking other medications that lower blood sugar and individuals with diabetes must be monitored as medication adjustments may be necessary.

For cooking purposes, clove can be used in either whole or ground form. Its flavor can be described as sweetly pungent and strongly aromatic. Clove imparts a strong flavor so only a small amount is needed. Dried cloves play an important role in the production of chai tea. Traditionally, clove has been used in combinations with cumin and cinnamon, and whole cloves can be added to enhance the flavor of rice. Feel free to experiment with different recipes, but on the back is a winning recipe for Spiced Sweet Potatoes.

Sources

www.nlm.nih.gov

www.thespicehouse.com

www.theepicentre.com/spices/cloves

Fruit of the Quarter: Persimmons

Fall is a perfect time of year for a Persimmon. Persimmons, once called the “fruit of the Gods”, are in season from October through December, reaching the peak of their season in November. They look like a cross between a pumpkin and a tomato, ranging in color from a yellow-orange to a deep red-orange. They are commonly described as “crisp like an apple, sweet like a pear”. In a poem entitled *Persimmons*, Li-Young Lee wrote “Some things never leave a person: scent of the hair of the one you love, & the texture of persimmons, in your palm, the ripe weight.”

Persimmon Primer

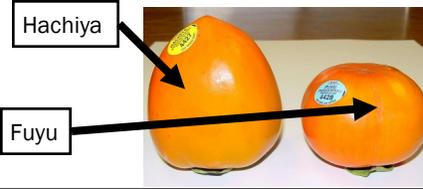
Persimmons are originally from Japan and China, but are now seen all over the world. Technically, a persimmon is a berry. In the United States, many different varieties of Persimmons are grown, but the most popular varieties are the **Hachiya** and the **Fuyu**. The **Hachiya** is the most common, accounting for 90% of the fruit on the market. It is shaped like an acorn. This variety must be consumed when ripe, (it’s ripe when it’s squishy like a water balloon). The unripe Hachiya has a lot of *tannin*, which gives the fruit a very astringent quality and sour taste that will surely make you pucker. In fact, the literal translation of the word *Persimmon* is “a dry fruit”. The **Fuyu**, (resembling a miniature pumpkin) on the other hand, has less tannin, and can be eaten right away. They are sold at fruit markets, some bodegas and grocery stores.

The How (and Why) to Eat a Persimmon

Eating a persimmon is easy: eat it fresh. The whole fruit is edible except for the “calyx” (see picture). Persimmons can also be consumed dried, or even baked into cookies, breads, cakes, puddings and salads. It is an excellent source of Beta Carotene (Vitamin A), Vitamin C, and fiber. A more tannic fruit was once used to treat constipation and other gastrointestinal problems. It is a great source of fiber, which can help alleviate constipation and keep your stomach and intestines happy and healthy.



A Fuyu persimmon. The arrow is pointing to the “calyx”.



Hachiya

Fuyu

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 medium Persimmon (168 g)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 120	Calories from fat 5
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0 g	0%
Saturated Fat 0 g	0%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	0%
Sodium 0 mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 31 g	10%
Dietary Fiber 6 g	21%
Sugars 21 g	
Protein 1 g	
Vitamin A 410%	Vitamin C 90%
Calcium 15%	Iron 10%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Persimmon and Apple Salad

Makes 6 servings

Each serving equals 1/2 cup of fruit or vegetables

Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp walnut pieces, toasted
- 2 Tbsp orange juice
- 1 Tbsp sherry vinegar
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 3 sweet variety apples, rinsed, cored, and thinly sliced lengthwise
- 3 firm-ripe Fuyu persimmons, rinsed, stemmed, and thinly sliced lengthwise

Method

In a bowl, combine orange juice, vinegar, and olive oil. Add apples, persimmons, and toasted walnuts and mix to coat.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 90, Protein 0g, Fat 3g, Calories From Fat 29%, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 16g, Fiber 3g, Sodium 15mg.



Source: <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/persimmons.html>

Spiced Sweet Potatoes

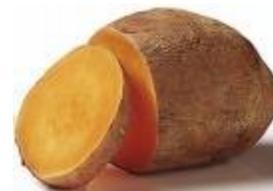
Ingredients:

- 6 medium sweet potatoes
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 3 tablespoons honey

Directions:

Boil sweet potatoes in water to cover in saucepan until tender. Peel and cut into 1/2 inch slices. Mix cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, and salt in a bowl. Layer sweet potatoes in a round baking pan, sprinkling each layer with spice mixture, dotting with butter, and drizzling with honey. Bake at 375°F for 20 minutes or until heated through.

Yield: 6-8 servings



If you would like to schedule a nutrition counseling appointment, please call:

Margaret Swift, RD at 212-367-1263 OR
Sarah Robertson, RD, CDN at 212-367-1261

