



HEALTH AWARENESS

Tips On Safe Herb Use

(NAPSA)—Millions of Americans take herbal supplements, but how do you know which ones are safe? What about any drug interactions or potentially harmful adverse reactions? Rachel Agnew, M.S., R.D., continuing education specialist for Nature's Resource herbal supplements, is an expert who frequently advises consumers and pharmacists on herbs.

Agnew suggests the following tips to help consumers use herbs safely.

1. Talk to your doctor or preferred health care professional

If you are taking prescription medication, or are scheduled for surgery, be sure your physician is fully aware of any herbal supplements you may be taking. Like oil and water, some combination of medications and supplements may not mix.

2. Know your Herbal ABCs

Always read product labels, follow dosage directions, and heed any warnings. Some quality manufacturers, such as Nature's Resource, have new booklet labels right on the bottle. These informative labels have detailed herb information, including: historical use, scientific support, potential interactions with prescription and over-the-counter drugs, contraindications and pregnancy and lactation guidance.

3. Do your homework

It's important to know about the herbal supplements available. Surf the Web sites of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) at www.fda.gov, or The American



New booklet labels offer a wealth of information to help you use herbs safely.

Botanical Council (ABC), a non-profit herbal medicine education and research organization, at www.herbalgram.org.

4. Look for a recognizable name brand

Purchase herbal supplements from a reliable manufacturer. Conduct research on the company, or ask for your doctor's recommendation. Be leery of potential false or outrageous claims on product labels such as "miracle cure" or "cure-all." If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

5. Take caution if pregnant or nursing

If you are expecting or nursing, be sure to tell your doctor what supplements you were using and for how long. The ingredients in supplements can be passed on to a nursing infant.

For more information, visit www.naturesresource.com or call Nature's Resource consumer affairs department at 1-800-314-HERB.