

A Recipe for Improved Nonsurgical Cosmetic Outcomes: Know Your Herbs and Spices

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The nonsurgical cosmetic arena continues to grow, with more people consistently seeking minimally invasive procedures for facial rejuvenation. However, although these prospective patients are not seeking surgical correction to obtain their results, there is still the potential for nonsurgical procedures to yield adverse events posttreatment. Patients often do not realize that their dietary regimens may affect their nonsurgical cosmetic outcomes. For example, many patients desiring these types of treatments are often found to be taking prescription medications, herbs, and spices on a daily basis that may have the capacity to potentiate adverse outcomes such as bleeding and/or bruising. For these reasons, it is important for clinicians to be inclusive while taking health histories and to properly educate their patients so that administered treatments have the best chance of yielding the desired results. The focus of this article is to provide health care providers information on many of the herbs and spices that have the potential to negatively impact nonsurgical cosmetic outcomes.

Over the past 5 years, the number of people seeking nonsurgical cosmetic procedures has increased by 44% (American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, 2015). Patient-provider communication is essential when taking a health history because patients may present with a personal history of medications or medical conditions that have the capacity to negatively influence their nonsurgical cosmetic outcomes (De Boule & Heydenrych, 2015). Health care providers also need to be aware of the various herbal substances that their patients may be taking on a daily basis (Ismail, 2009).

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Obtaining a complete health history, which includes prescription and herbal drugs/spices prior to treatment, becomes essential for ensuring patient safety and satisfaction (Hussain, 2011). Although herbs/spices also have the capacity to affect surgical outcomes, this article focuses solely on the potential negative effects of herbs/spices on nonsurgical cosmetic procedures.

BACKGROUND

Over the last few years, there has been an overwhelming increase of herbal consumption noted in the United States (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2011, p. 334). Yet, only a very small percentage of patients have been shown to initiate conversations with their health care providers regarding their herbal usage (Kennedy, Wang, & Wu, 2008). As defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n.d.-a), "An herb is a plant or plant part valued for its medicinal, savory, or aromatic qualities," whereas a spice is defined as "a seasoning (as pepper or nutmeg) that comes from a dried plant part and that is usually a powder or seed" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.-b). Because the Food and Drug Administration does not regulate herbs by the same standards used to evaluate prescription medications, and herbs can interact with medications and affect body functions, it becomes just as important for health care providers to be aware of the herbs their patients may be taking on a daily basis (Anastasi, Chang, & Capili, 2011).

Herbal agents alone or in combination with certain medications may have the ability to affect the efficacy of nonsurgical cosmetic outcomes, thus underscoring the need for clinicians to educate their patients prior to treatment (Emer & Waldorf, 2011). Many patients have been shown to mix their prescription and herbal medications together without truly understanding how this can result in complications (Hussain, 2011).

HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS/SPICES

Salicylates and Coumarin

There are many herbs and/or spices that contain substances such as salicylates and coumarin that prevent or inhibit the formation of blood clots. Salicylates (Table 1) not only are found in medications but are also incorporated into certain spices, foods, and beverages (Waldron

TABLE 1 Spices Containing Salicylates
Cinnamon
Turmeric
Curry powder
Oregano
Peppermint
Cayenne
Ginger
Paprika
Dill (p. 5)
<i>Note.</i> This adapted list identifies some of the more common spices. Full list is available within the cited article. From <i>Natural Supplements, Herbs, Vitamins and Food: Do Some Prevent Blood Clots?</i> by B. Waldron and S. Moll, 2013. Retrieved February 18, 2017, from http://files.www.clotconnect.org/patients/resources/brochures/Natural_supplements-Brochure_May_2013.pdf .

& Moll, 2013, p. 5). In addition, there are a number of herbs that contain coumarin, which has anticoagulant properties (Waldron & Moll, 2013, p. 6). Again, the importance of clinicians taking a thorough patient health history cannot be emphasized enough, as ingesting certain herbs/spices prior to treatment may affect non-surgical cosmetic outcomes (Brennan, 2014). In addition, consumption of herbs/spices in combination with certain medications may contribute to increased risk of excessive bleeding and bruising (Waldron & Moll, 2013).

As a result, knowledge of spices that contain natural salicylates becomes invaluable by providing clinicians significant information to make appropriate decisions during their patient selections and treatments.

There are a number of herbal supplements that have been found to contain coumarin (Table 2). As discussed by Waldron and Moll (2013), "Since natural coumarins have anticoagulant properties, caution may be warranted by persons taking prescription anticoagulants to avoid excessive bleeding risk" (p. 6). For these reasons, it is once again important for a health care provider to be aware of these potential blood thinners so that patients may be properly prepared for their nonsurgical cosmetic procedures by educating them on the potential consequences of ingesting certain medications, herbs, and spices.

Evidence has shown that there are a number of herbs and spices that may affect platelets, thus potentially promoting bleeding and/or bruising (Table 3; Nutescu et al., 2006). Moreover, because many people think that *all herbs are safe and natural* (Hussain, 2011), it is possible that they may be mixing certain medications with herbs and creating an opportunity for their body to bruise or bleed more than normal if they were to have any nonsurgical cosmetic treatments (Nutescu et al., 2006; Samuels, 2005).

Anecdotally, many patients that I have interviewed during their first office visit acknowledged taking one or

TABLE 2 Herbal Supplements Containing Coumarin	
Alfalfa	Horseradish
Angelica root	Lavender
Aniseed	Licorice root
Arnica	Parsley
Bilberry	Red clover
Cassia cinnamon	Sweet clover
Celery seed	Wild carrot
Chamomile	Wild lettuce
Chicory	The essential oils: cassia oil, cinnamon bark oil, lavender oil (p. 444)
Dandelion	
Dong quai	
<i>Note.</i> This adapted list identifies some of the more common herbal supplements containing coumarin. Full list is available within the cited article. From "Warfarin and Its Interactions With Food, Herbs, and Other Dietary Supplements," by E. Nutescu, N. Shapiro, S. Ibrahim, and P. West, 2006, <i>Expert Opinion on Drug Safety</i> , 5(3), pp. 433-451. doi:10.1517/14740338.5.3.433.	

all of these mentioned herbs and/or spices: fish oils, the three G's: garlic, ginkgo, and ginger, onion, and turmeric, with a small percentage also taking blood thinners. Knowing this type of information prior to an actual treatment enabled me to properly educate those patients regarding possible negative outcomes from the herbs/spices being consumed, potential increased bleeding and bruising, in addition to providing them with realistic expectations. Although a patient taking blood thinners, herbs, spices, or a combination of all three may be injected, depending on age, diet, exercise schedule, skin thickness, turgor, and skin elasticity, a clinician might decide that some patients are not desirable candidates for nonsurgical cosmetic treatments at their initial office visit (Brennan, 2014; Samuels, 2005).

TABLE 3 Herbal Supplements That May Affect Platelets and Coagulation	
Clove	Melatonin
Cod liver oil	Onion
Fish oil	Turmeric
Flax seed	Vitamin E
Garlic, Ginger, Ginkgo	Willow bark (p. 446)
Ginseng, Panax and Siberian	
<i>Note.</i> This adapted list identifies some of the more common herbal supplements that may affect platelets and coagulation. Full list is available within the cited article. From "Warfarin and Its Interactions With Food, Herbs, and Other Dietary Supplements," by E. Nutescu, N. Shapiro, S. Ibrahim, and P. West, 2006, <i>Expert Opinion on Drug Safety</i> , 5(3), pp. 433-451. doi:10.1517/14740338.5.3.433.	

PRACTICE TIPS FOR CLINICIANS

All patients should be given a thorough, good faith, or appropriate examination. This verbal examination will provide clinicians with in-depth health history information so they may determine whether this potential patient is a good candidate to receive any nonsurgical cosmetic treatments on the same day as his or her initial consult. This examination should be performed by the MD or advanced practice registered nurse prior to treatment. In addition, all returning patients should be questioned whether anything in their medical history has changed since their last visit.

Upon questioning, if patients acknowledge that they have been taking a number of herbs/spices on a daily basis that their health care provider believes might negatively affect the procedures outcome, the patients should be given the opportunity to decide if they want to proceed knowing that their chances of bleeding and/or bruising may significantly increase. There are varied articles addressing how many days prior to treatment a patient should stop his or her herbal/spice intake to achieve the best nonsurgical cosmetic outcomes. Evidence has suggested anywhere from right before and after the treatment (Brennan, 2014) to 1 week prior to any treatment (Anastasi et al., 2011).

CONCLUSION

The number of people taking herbs/spices continues to increase (Hussain, 2011). As reflected in the literature, many individuals consuming these products are not aware of their potency or potential effects (Ismail, 2009). Also, many are mixing their herbs with medications unaware of how these interactions might affect their health (Hussain, 2011). This article has attempted to present the importance of including herb/spice intake in patients' health histories, knowing about these products and how they may impact the results of a nonsurgical cosmetic procedure, and the importance of educating

patients about their herbal/spice regimens to maximize outcomes.

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