

FOX PATIENT SAFETY



Volume 1 Issue 1

A Publication of Fox Army Health Center

February 2004

HERBAL PRODUCTS: SAFE OR NOT?

Many people use herbal products in this country. An herb is a plant or plant product used for its scent, flavor, or therapeutic properties. Most people use it for therapeutic properties; whether that is energy booster, memory improvement, arthritis, vitamin or diet supplement, immune booster or just for good health. Studies suggest one in three Americans use herbal products. So the question arises: Are these products safe?

Just because an herbal product is labeled "natural" does not mean it is safe or without harmful effects. Let's list some reasons why they aren't safe: published analyses of herbal products have found differences between what is listed on the label and what is in the bottle, and some have been found to be contaminated with metals, unlabeled prescription drugs, microorganisms, or other substances.

In this country, the U.S Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates herbal products as foods under the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA) of 1994. This means herbal products do not require safety testing like drugs and over-the-counter medications for proof of safety, effectiveness or Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).

It is important to consult your health care provider before starting a herbal product if you:

- Are thinking of replacing your regular medications with one or more herbal products. (May increase or decrease effectiveness of certain medications).
- Have a chronic medical condition
- Are pregnant or nursing a baby.
- Are thinking about giving a child an herbal product.

Ensure you are being asked about herbal product use at each medical visit.

Herbal products safe or not? You choose.

Website:<http://nccam.nih.gov/>

JCAHO QUESTION

Q: Where is the drug formulary located?

A: A copy is available for each clinic area and with each provider. In addition, the formulary is located on the public drive. Hard copies are also available from the Pharmacy. The formulary is also located on Fox Internet site at

<http://www.redstone.amedd.army.mil/pharmacy/formulary.asp>

NATIONAL PATIENT SAFETY GOALS

When our next JCAHO inspection begin in 2005 top priority will be the 2004 JCAHO National Patient Safety Goals. These goals consist of things JCAHO believe all healthcare centers should be focused on to ensure they are operating safely for thier patients. These include:

- Goal 1: Improve the accuracy of patient identification
- Goal 2: Improve the effectiveness of communication among caregivers
- Goal 3: Improve the safety of using high-alert medications
- Goal 4: Eliminate wrong-site, wrong-patient, and wrong-procedure surgery
- Goal 5: Improve the safety of using infusion pumps
- Goal 6: Improve the effectiveness of clinical alarm systems
- Goal 7: Reduce the risk of health care-acquired infections

Each bi-monthly issue will concentrate on a different goal. Within a few months we will all be knowledgeable in how to meet each of these goals.

DID YOU KNOW?

Sentinel Event is defined as an unexpected occurrence involving death, serious physical or psychological injury, or the risk thereof (i.e. major permanent loss of function, infant abduction, rape, wrong site/patient surgery). The total number of sentinel events reviewed by Joint Commission since January 1995 to December 17, 2003 totaled 2,405.

Of this events reported:

- 370-- patient suicides
- 296-- wrong --site surgery
- 276-- medication error
- 109-- pt falls
- 7-- infant discharged to wrong family

HELP WANTED

Do you possess a better name for this newsletter? If so, submit your newsletter idea to Truelove Sandifer, Patient Safety Manager 2nd floor Room 2A-23. If your suggestion is selected, a gift awaits you.

Contact Info: Truelove T. Sandifer, Patient Safety Manager
Email: trulove.t.sandifer@se.amedd.army.mil
Phone: 955-0305