



# The Beacon

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## Med-Cert Medical Management Resources

“Guiding your way to better health management”

### HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS:

#### How They Can Interfere With Surgery

**Before you have surgery, tell your doctor about any herbal supplements you're taking. Some common herbal supplements can interfere with the success of your surgery.**

You might not think to tell your doctor about the herbal supplements you're taking, such as the echinacea you take to fight off colds or the feverfew you use to prevent your migraines. But what you may not realize is that these and other herbal supplements can affect the success of a surgical procedure, just as conventional medicines can. Tell your doctor about any herbal supplements you're taking well before you have surgery. You may need to stop taking some herbal supplements up to three weeks before surgery to make sure they leave your system completely.

Here's a look at some common herbal supplements and how they can interfere with surgery. Keep in mind that other herbal supplements also may affect your surgery, so be sure to also tell your doctor if you're taking any herbs that aren't on this list.

Herbal supplement	Possible complications
Danshen	May cause bleeding
Dong quai	May cause bleeding

Echinacea	May interfere with immune functioning, may alter effectiveness of immunosuppressant drugs given after transplant surgery
Ephedra	May cause abnormal heartbeat, may cause extreme high blood pressure and coma if combined with certain antidepressants and anesthesia
Feverfew	May cause bleeding
Garlic	May cause bleeding, may interfere with normal blood clotting
Ginger	May cause bleeding
Ginkgo	May cause bleeding
Ginseng	May cause bleeding, may cause rapid heartbeat, may cause high blood pressure
Goldenseal	May cause or worsen high blood pressure
Kava	May enhance sedative effects of anesthesia
Licorice (not including licorice candy)	May increase blood pressure
Senna	May cause electrolyte imbalance
St. John's wort	May increase or decrease the effects of some drugs used during and after surgery
Valerian	May interfere with the effects of anesthesia



### EGG QUIZ:

**From fried to dyed, test your smarts**

1. Dyed or decorated eggs are always safe to eat.
2. Eggshell color affects an egg's taste and nutritional quality.
3. Egg whites contain no fat.
4. All eggs are pasteurized.
5. Hard boiled eggs spoil faster than fresh eggs.

### ANSWERS:

1. **FALSE:** Sometimes dyed or decorated eggs are safe to eat, but not always. It depends on how you handle the eggs and how long they remain at room temperature.
2. **FALSE:** Eggshell color has no effect on the taste or nutritional content of an egg. The breed of the hen laying the egg determines an eggshell's color. Breeds with white feathers lay white eggs, breeds with red feathers lay brown eggs.
3. **TRUE:** Egg whites are fat-free. The fat and cholesterol in an egg comes from the yolk. A large egg's yolk has about 5 grams of fat and 212 milligrams of cholesterol. *National dietary guidelines recommend an intake of no more than 300 mg of cholesterol a day for healthy adults.*
4. **FALSE:** Some stores sell pasteurized shell eggs, but most don't. Pasteurization – heating eggs or egg products to a certain temperature for a specific amount of

time – destroys harmful bacteria. This process is not done widely for fresh eggs. However, all egg products are pasteurized. So, while it's not safe to eat raw eggs or undercooked whole eggs, you can eat raw or undercooked pasteurized egg products. To find pasteurized shell eggs, look for sealed cartons labeled "pasteurized".

- TRUE:** Store bought eggs have a tasteless natural mineral oil covering the shell to protect it from harmful bacteria. When you wash or cook eggs, that coating comes off, leaving the egg more susceptible to spoilage. Refrigerate hard boiled eggs within 2 hours of cooking, and eat within one week.

Note: You can keep fresh eggs for 3-5 weeks in your refrigerator.

## HAND WASHING

Hand-washing is a simple and effective way to help prevent diseases, such as colds, flu, and food poisoning.

### When to wash your hands:

- Often, especially during cold and flu season, can reduce your risk of catching or spreading a cold or the flu.
- Before and after preparing or serving food reduces your risk of catching or spreading bacteria that cause food poisoning. Be especially careful to wash before and after preparing poultry, raw eggs, meat, or seafood.
- After going to the bathroom or changing diapers reduces your risk of catching or spreading infectious diseases such as salmonella or hepatitis A.

### Wash your hands after:

- Eating or snacking
- Handling money
- Touching your ears, nose, or mouth
- Blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Touching your pets
- Any kind of cleaning or hand contact with dirty equipment or work surfaces
- Caring for someone who is sick or injured
- Taking out the garbage
- Using the bathroom
- Changing diapers



## Make New Friends and Keep the Old

Plans with friends offer more than good times -- they can be lifesavers as well.

A recent study supports the theory that a large network of friends helps extend people's life spans. In the study, friendships appeared to increase people's longevity even more than family relationships did. Round up your buddies this weekend for a movie, a meal, or a chat over iced tea.

**Benefit:** During stressful times, strong friendships can make your RealAge from 2 to 30 years younger.

## POP QUIZ

Which spice should you use to boost the antioxidant power of your hot cocoa?

Cinnamon, researchers have discovered, has potent antioxidant properties, most likely due to the heart-healthy phenols in the spice

Which kind of cancer does cabbage protect against? Lung cancer

Which kind of healthy fat is found in roasted pumpkin seeds? Alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), a healthy fat that reduces inflammation, improves blood vessel health, and has beneficial effects on blood fats

Which fall chore may help lower your blood pressure? Raking the leaves decreases blood pressure in people with hypertension or prehypertension

## Those Amazing Apples



Finish up those autumn apples.

They're good for your brain. Apples are high in quercetin, a compound with antioxidant properties that may decrease the risk of neurodegenerative conditions such as Alzheimer's by protecting brain cell membranes. Quercetin has an even higher antioxidant capacity than vitamin C, studies suggest. Other ways to get your fill: tea, onions, and cranberries.

**Benefit:** Eating a diverse diet that includes 4 servings of fruit per day can make your RealAge as much as 4 years younger.

### Med-Cert provides:

*Utilization Management, Maternity Management, Large Case and Wellness Disease Management, Transplant Coordination and Stop Loss Assessments*

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## Healthy Blueberry & Banana Muffins



*These delicious muffins are packed with oat bran, soy milk, and fresh fruit.*

- 1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup oat bran
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup mashed ripe bananas (about 3)
- 1/2 cup unflavored soy milk
- 1 large egg
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 1/2 cups fresh blueberries or 1 1/2 cups frozen blueberries, unthawed (6 to 7 ounces)

Preheat oven to 400°F. Line 12 muffin cups with paper liners. Combine flour, sugar, oat bran, baking powder, and salt in medium bowl; whisk to blend.

Place mashed bananas in large bowl. Stir in soy milk, egg, oil, and lemon juice. Mix in dry ingredients, then blueberries. Divide batter among muffin papers. Bake muffins until tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 20 minutes. Turn muffins out onto rack and cool 10 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.



This newsletter is brought to you courtesy of Med-Cert, Inc. Our sources for this edition were the Web MD, Real Age - Health Tools and Tips for Living Younger, Mayo Clinic and Epicurious web sites.