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The Natural Standard. Database. The Natural Standard. Contact publisher for subscription and pricing information.

Consumers spend \$30 billion a year on herbs, vitamins, supplements, and other alternative therapies. How can they find out whether these treatments work for specific conditions or for general health purposes? Physicians often know little about them. The Natural Standard Database is an excellent resource for learning about complementary and alternative treatments.

The database is easy to use. An international team of more than 500 contributors, health care professionals with academic affiliations, searches nine major databases (AMRD, CANCERLIT, CINAHL, CISCOM, Cochrane, EMBASE, Hebmed, International Pharmaceutical Abstracts, Medline, and NAPRALERT) and twenty journals not indexed in databases to collect information. They search for literature on efficacy in humans, dosage, adverse effects, and use during pregnancy and lactation, mechanism of action, and effects on laboratory tests. All literature undergoes blind review by the editorial board. The database is updated every three to eighteen months, varying by topic. Important new information is added as quickly as possible.

Users may search or browse by broad category. These include foods, herbs, and supplements; health and wellness; comparative effectiveness; medical conditions; genomics and proteomics; brand names; and interactive tools. The information provided includes an explanation of the plant or food, the products in which it may be found, uses, dosage, adverse effects, efficacy and safety, and mechanism of action. Information about interactions with other drugs, herbs, and foods and a grade for effectiveness based on evidence make this database very useful. The grades are based on literature searches: A, strong evidence; B, good evidence; C, inconclusive or unclear evidence; D, fair negative evidence; and F, strong negative evidence. The reports are available in three formats: a professional monograph with a detailed report, a bottom line report in English or Spanish suitable for professionals or patients, and a flashcard with a brief summary. Current news items and a reference list with hot links to the articles are available also. Users may also search by condition to find and compare alternative therapies or check interactions between drugs and herbs, supplements, and foods. The database also has a dictionary of over 10,000 CAM and traditional medical terms, a brand name section to check ingredients, and a database of CAM practitioners and CAM training programs. The Natural Standard publishes a free newsletter available by e-mail or RSS, too. It is an excellent resource for academic, hospital, consumer health, and public libraries.

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