

## Dietary Supplements

**Instructions:** Use this job aid as a resource of commonly used dietary supplements and the reasons why people take them. This information should not be given directly to a participant or be used as a handout.

- **Alfalfa** - taken to increase milk supply in lactating women.
- **Aloe Vera** - taken internally for use as a laxative; external use for burns (including sunburn), skin abrasions, or in cosmetics.
- **Astragalus** - used as an immune system enhancer.
- **Calendula** - used topically to treat skin ailments, including diaper rash, bites or stings, burns, and fungal infections (including thrush).
- **Cascara Sagrada** - used as a stimulant laxative.
- **Capsicum (Cayenne Pepper)** - taken internally as a circulatory stimulant or to stimulate digestion. Used externally, in a cream, as a pain reliever.
- **Chamomile** - taken to treat digestive upset, including colic in infants.
- **Cranberry** - taken to treat urinary tract infections.
- **DHA (Docosahexaenoic Acid)** - taken to improve brain function and vision. This is currently being marketed to pregnant and breastfeeding women to increase their children's IQ.
- **Dong Quai** - taken to treat muscle cramps and pain associated with menstruation.
- **Echinacea** - taken to strengthen the immune system.
- **EPA (Eicosapentaenoic Acid)** - taken as an antioxidant and for cardiac and joint support.
- **Evening Primrose Oil** - promoted for its ability to increase prostaglandin production, it is used to treat "female" problems such as premenstrual syndrome or the effects of menopause. It is also used to ripen the cervix at the end of pregnancy.
- **Fenugreek** - taken for many purported uses, including constipation, elevated blood glucose, and to increase milk supply in lactating women.
- **Feverfew** - taken for its analgesic properties.
- **Garlic** - taken for many reasons, including antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, and hypotensive properties; also used as a cholesterol-lowering agent.
- **Ginger** - taken for nausea, vomiting, and motion sickness.
- **Ginkgo Biloba** - taken to improve memory/brain function; purported to increase oxygen and blood flow to the brain.

- **Ginseng** - taken as a treatment for stress and to increase energy and endurance.
- **Melatonin** - used to treat insomnia or jet lag.
- **Peppermint** - taken in capsule form or as a tea, it is used for its calming effect on the stomach and intestinal tract.
- **Psyllium** - approved as a bulk laxative.
- **Slippery Elm Bark** - taken in capsule form, as a lozenge, or brewed in tea, it is used for cough, sore throat, diarrhea, or other inflammations/irritations of the mucus membranes.
- **Valerian** - taken for its sedative properties.
- **Vitex** - used to regulate the menstrual cycle and relieve symptoms of premenstrual syndrome.
- **Witch Hazel** - used topically as an astringent.