



A drug interaction can occur when a drug is taken with another substance—prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, alcohol, herbs, supplements, food, water etc. Some interactions can increase or decrease the drug levels in the blood which could lead to the development of drug resistance. Another problem is that the drugs might not be effective or the drugs could be deadly if the blood drug levels are too high.

## What are Drug Interactions?

Listed below are examples of interactions:

**Drugs and herbal medications:** St. John's wort and Milk Thistle can affect how much of some drugs are absorbed into the blood stream and could lead to the drugs not working.

**Drug-Drug:** Ritonavir is an HIV medication that is widely used to increase the blood levels of certain HIV medications.

**Drug and food or drink interaction:** Many drugs are affected when taken with food or drink. Grapefruit (and juice) can lower the blood levels of ritonavir and simvastatin (a statin drug used to lower cholesterol levels). Alcohol can have interactions with a variety of drugs like diabetes medications and anti-depressants.

**Overdosing:** Acetaminophen (Tylenol, Paracetamol—found in over 600 products) results in 78,000 emergency room visits and 500 deaths every year especially if taken with alcohol.

## REMEMBER

- Any medicine, herb, food, or drink has the potential to affect how some drugs work in the body.
- Make sure to tell your medical provider about any prescribed or over-the-counter medications, herbs or anything else you are taking so they can guide you in what to take safely.

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HEPATITIS C  
SUPPORT PROJECT

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