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2. Echinacea

# Echinacea

**Generic name:** echinacea [ *eck-i-NAY-sha* ]

**Dosage form:** oral tablet (-)

**Drug class:** [Herbal products](#)



[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on Apr 3, 2025. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).

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## What is echinacea?

Echinacea is an herb also known as Purple Cone Flower, Black Sampson, Black Susans, Fleur à Hérisson, Hedgehog, Igelkopfwurzel, Indian Head, Kansas Snakeroot, Red Sunflower, Rock-Up-Hat, Roter Sonnenhut, Rudbeckie Pourpre, Scurvy Root, Snakeroot, and many other names.

Echinacea has been used in alternative medicine as a **possibly effective** aid in treating the [common cold](#), or vaginal yeast infections.

Echinacea has also been used to treat ear infections, or increasing exercise performance. However, research has shown that echinacea **may not be effective** in these conditions.

Other uses **not proven with research** have included treating anxiety, [migraine headache](#), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), [gingivitis](#), tonsillitis, genital herpes, [human papilloma virus](#) (HPV), low white blood cell counts, bladder infections, an eye condition called uveitis, and other conditions.

It is not certain whether echinacea is effective in treating any medical condition. Medicinal use of this product has not been approved by the FDA. Echinacea should not be used in place of medication prescribed for you by your doctor.

Echinacea is often sold as an herbal supplement. There are no regulated manufacturing standards in place for many herbal compounds and some marketed supplements have been found to be contaminated with toxic metals or other drugs. Herbal/health supplements should be purchased from a reliable source to minimize the risk of contamination.

Echinacea may also be used for purposes not listed in this product guide.

## Echinacea side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction**: hives; difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Although not all side effects are known, echinacea is thought to be possibly safe when taken for a short period of time.

## Common side effects of echinacea may include:

- nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, diarrhea;
- fever, [sore throat](#);
- muscle or [joint pain](#);
- unusual or unpleasant taste in the mouth;
- [dry mouth](#), numb feeling in your tongue;
- headache, dizziness, confusion; or
- sleep problems (insomnia).

Echinacea applied to the skin in a topical form can cause an itchy or red skin rash.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Echinacea side effects](#) (more detail)

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## Warnings

Follow all directions on the product label and package. Tell each of your healthcare providers about all your medical

conditions, allergies, and all medicines you use.

## Before taking this medicine

You should not use this product if you are allergic to echinacea or if you have:

- an autoimmune disorder such as [rheumatoid arthritis](#), lupus, or [psoriasis](#).

Ask a doctor, pharmacist, or other healthcare provider if it is safe for you to use this product **if you have any allergies, especially plant allergies** (especially ragweed, mums, marigolds, or daisies).

**Ask a doctor before using echinacea if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.**

Do not give any herbal/health supplement to a child without medical advice. Echinacea should not be used in a child younger than 12 years old.

## How should I take echinacea?

When considering the use of herbal supplements, seek the advice of your doctor. You may also consider consulting a practitioner who is trained in the use of herbal/health supplements.

If you choose to use echinacea, use it as directed on the package or as directed by your doctor, pharmacist, or other healthcare provider. Do not use more of this product than is recommended on the label.

Echinacea is believed to work best when taken at the first sign of a cold. Although echinacea may not prevent a cold, this product might make [cold symptoms](#) less severe.

Do not take topical (for the skin) echinacea by mouth. Topical forms of this product are for use only on the skin.

Do not use different forms (tablets, liquid, tincture, teas, etc) of echinacea at the same time without medical advice. Using different formulations together increases the risk of an overdose.

Call your doctor if the condition you are treating with echinacea does not improve, or if it gets worse while using this product.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

## What happens if I miss a dose?

Skip the missed dose and take the next regularly scheduled dose. **Do not** take two doses at one time.

## What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

## What should I avoid while taking echinacea?

Avoid coffee, tea, cola, energy drinks, or other products that contain caffeine. Taking echinacea with caffeinated products can increase caffeine side effects such as headache, increased heart rate, and feeling jittery.

## What other drugs will affect echinacea?

Do not take echinacea without medical advice **if you are using a medication to treat any of the following conditions:**

- any type of infection (including HIV, malaria, or [tuberculosis](#));
- anxiety or [depression](#);
- asthma or allergies;
- cancer;
- [erectile dysfunction](#);
- heartburn or gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD);
- [high blood pressure](#), [high cholesterol](#), or a heart condition;
- migraine headaches;
- psoriasis, rheumatoid [arthritis](#), or other [autoimmune disorders](#);
- a psychiatric disorder; or
- seizures.

This list is not complete. Other drugs may affect echinacea, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and [herbal products](#). Not all possible [drug interactions](#) are listed here.

 [Echinacea drug interactions](#) (more detail)

## Does echinacea interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

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Does Echinacea interact with any drugs?



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## Related treatment guides

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## Further information

- Consult with a licensed healthcare professional before using any herbal/health supplement. Whether you are treated by a medical doctor or a practitioner trained in the use of natural medicines/supplements, make sure all your healthcare providers know about all of your medical conditions and treatments.

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

### [Medical Disclaimer](#)

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### DRUG STATUS

#### Availability

OTC Over the counter

#### CSA Schedule\*

N/A Not a controlled drug



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8.2 / 10

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