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2. Milk thistle

# Milk thistle

**Generic name:** milk thistle [ *MILK-THIH-sull* ]**Drug class:** [Herbal products](#)[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on Sep 30, 2024. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).[Uses](#) [Side effects](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [What to avoid](#) [Interactions](#)

## What is milk thistle?

Milk thistle is a plant also known as Artichaut Sauvage, Cardo Lechoso, Cardui Mariae, Carduus marianus, Chardon Argenté, Chardon de Marie, Épine Blanche, Holy Thistle, Lady's Thistle, Lait de Notre-Dame, Legalon, Marian Thistle, Mariendistel, Mary Thistle, Shui Fei Ji, Silibinin, Silybe de Marie, Silybum, Silymarin, and other names.

Milk thistle has been used in alternative medicine as a **possibly effective** aid in treating [heartburn](#), or seasonal allergy symptoms. Milk thistle may have been combined with other plants or extracts in a specific preparation to treat these conditions.

Other uses **not proven with research** have included treating malaria, mushroom [poisoning](#), spleen or gallbladder problems, menstrual problems, liver problems (such as [hepatitis B](#) or C), and other conditions.

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

Milk thistle 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.

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

## Milk thistle side effects

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

**Common side effects of milk thistle may include:**

- indigestion, bloating, gas, stomach pain;
- diarrhea; or
- nausea, loss of appetite.

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.

 [Milk thistle 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 milk thistle or if you have:

- past or present cancer of the breast, uterus, or ovary; or
- a history of [endometriosis](#) or [uterine fibroids](#).

Ask a doctor, pharmacist, or other healthcare provider if it is safe for you to use this product if you have:

- an allergy to plants such as ragweed, chrysanthemums, marigolds, or daisies.

Before taking milk thistle, talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or health care professional if you have allergies (especially to plants), have any medical conditions, or if you take other medicines or other herbal/health supplements. Milk thistle may

not be recommended in some situations.

It is not known whether milk thistle will harm an unborn baby. **Do not use this product without medical advice if you are pregnant.**

It is not known whether milk thistle passes into breast milk or if it could harm a nursing baby. **Do not use this product without medical advice if you are breast-feeding a baby.**

Do not give any herbal/health supplement to a child without medical advice.

## How should I take milk thistle?

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 milk thistle, 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.

Do not use different forms (tablets, liquid, extract, teas, etc) of milk thistle 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 milk thistle does not improve, or if it gets worse while using this product.

Store at room temperature away from moisture, heat, and light.

## What happens if I miss a dose?

Skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next scheduled dose. **Do not** use extra milk thistle to make up the missed dose.

## 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 milk thistle?

Follow your healthcare provider's instructions about any restrictions on food, beverages, or activity.

## What other drugs will affect milk thistle?

Do not take milk thistle 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](#);
- [arthritis pain](#), occasional pain, or tension headaches (including Advil, Motrin, or [Celebrex](#));
- 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 interact with milk thistle, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and [herbal products](#). Not all possible interactions are listed in this product guide.

 [Milk thistle drug interactions](#) (more detail)

## Does milk thistle interact with my other drugs?

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

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- [Milk Thistle product monographs](#)

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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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