



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Arnica

This information describes the common uses of Arnica, how it works, and its possible side effects.

Tell your healthcare providers about any dietary supplements you're taking, such as herbs, vitamins, minerals, and natural or home remedies. This will help them manage your care and keep you safe.

What is it?

Arnica is a plant in the sunflower family. Its flowers and roots are used to treat many health issues. Arnica comes as tablets, gels, ointments, and creams.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

Arnica is used to:

- Reduce swelling
- Treat bruises (discoloration of skin due to injury)
- Treat sprains (torn or stretched ligament). Ligaments connect bone to bone and hold your joints in place.
- Reduce muscle pain
- Treat osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis is a disease in which the cartilage (protective tissue at the ends of bones) of your joint wears down. This can lead to pain and swelling.

Arnica also has other uses that haven't been studied by doctors to see if they work.

Talk with your healthcare provider before taking arnica supplements. They may affect how your other medications work. For more information, read the "What else do I need to know?" section below.

What are the side effects?

- Using arnica on your skin can cause irritation and swelling.

What else do I need to know?

- Talk with your healthcare provider if you're taking blood thinners such as warfarin (Coumadin[®], Jantoven[®]). Arnica may increase your risk of bleeding.
- Do not take arnica or use it on your skin if you're allergic to sunflowers, marigolds, ragweed, or other plants from the sunflower family.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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