



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Wheat germ extract

This information describes the common uses of Wheat germ extract, 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?

Fermented wheat germ may improve quality of life in cancer patients, but data is limited and more studies are needed.

Fermented wheat germ extract (WGE) was developed by Mate Hidvegi, a Hungarian chemist, in the 1990s. It should not be confused with wheat germ oil. WGE has been used as a dietary supplement by cancer patients in Hungary to improve quality of life. However, studies in humans are quite limited, and cancer patients should consult their physicians before taking WGE.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- **Cancer**
Limited data suggest WGE may improve quality of life in cancer patients, but larger well-designed studies are needed to establish its use.
- **Autoimmune disorders**
Animal studies suggest WGE is beneficial, but human data are lacking.
- **Immunostimulation**

Lab and observational studies suggest WGE can regulate the immune system.

What are the side effects?

Mild, infrequent: Diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting

Wheat germ extract may have estrogen receptor activity. Patients with hormone-sensitive cancers should consult with a physician before using WGE.

What else do I need to know?

Do Not Take if:

- You are pregnant or nursing.
- You had an organ or tissue transplant.
- You have bleeding, stomach or intestinal ulcers, or severe absorption problems.
- You have sensitivity to gluten.
- You are fructose intolerant.
- You are having barium X-ray contrast tests. Discontinue 2 days before and after test.

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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