

Integrative Medicine – A Clinician's Journal Aug/Sept 2009
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Mitchell Bebel Stargrove, ND, LAc; Jonathan Treasure, MA, MNIMH, RH; Dwight L. McKee, MD. Herb, Nutrient, and Drug Interactions. Clinical Implications and Therapeutic Strategies. Mosby/Elsevier, 2008. 932 pages.

This is a stunning tour de force. This well-research masterpiece is the most comprehensive compilation yet in describing our understanding of the complex world of interactions between natural products and pharmaceutical drugs. For each natural health product, the authors exhaustively cover its bioavailability and effects on drug metabolism, as well as its interactions with specific drugs—considering both theoretical considerations and documented interactions. The authors do quite a good job looking at the effects of each agent on the activity of the drug metabolizing cytochrome P450s. However, of special merit is their innovative introduction of strategic considerations, which helps provide a conceptual framework for thinking about each agent and its potential interactions. Further enhancing this remarkable work is that the authors consider not just adverse reactions but beneficial interactions as well. Finally, the book contains a CD-ROM that contains the references indexed for easy searching. Required for any practitioner who wants to master truly integrated medicine, this one also gets a place on my desk.

Strengths. Covers not just the adverse interactions, but the complementary ones as well.

Weaknesses. Understanding the symbols summarizing the interaction potential and clinical significance of each nutrient has a steep learning curve. However, I don't see a better alternative and it seems a reasonable price to pay for such an in-depth, authoritative resource.