

GLOWWELL

SUPPLEMENTS BEFORE SURGERY

What to stop and when

The stop times on this list are not GlowWell's opinion. They come from SPAQI, a medical society that focuses on getting patients ready for surgery. In 2021, its doctors reviewed 83 supplements and said which ones to stop before surgery, and when. It is the most complete review of its kind that we have found.

Many common supplements can change how your blood clots, your blood pressure, your blood sugar, or how anesthesia works. This list covers the 74 the panel said to stop, sorted by when to stop them.

6

Stop completely

60

Stop 2 weeks before

2

Stop 48 hours before

6

Stop 24 hours before

HOW TO USE THIS LIST

- **Your surgical team's instructions come first.** If your surgeon or anesthesia team tells you something different, follow them. Many surgeons have their own stop list.
- **This list covers supplements only.** Never stop a prescription medicine because of this list. Ask your care team about every medicine you take.
- **Check every ingredient in a blend.** If a powder, capsule, or drink mix contains anything on a stop list, treat the whole product as on that list. Many multivitamins contain vitamin E or chromium, so ask your team about yours.

- **Tell your team everything you take.** Bring the bottles, or photos of the labels, to your pre-op visit.



STOP COMPLETELY

Not recommended at all, with or without surgery

These 6 are not recommended at all, with or without surgery. Stop them as early as you can, and tell your team what you were using.

SUPPLEMENT	ALSO CALLED OR FOUND IN	WHY
CBD	Cannabidiol oils, gummies, hemp extracts	May affect how blood clots. Can interact with anesthesia medicines. Little proof that store-bought products work.
DMAA	Dimethylamylamine; some pre-workout and weight-loss products	Acts like a strong stimulant on the heart and blood pressure. Not allowed for sale as a supplement in the U.S.
Ephedra	Ma huang	Can cause dangerous heart rhythms. Linked to strokes and seizures. Banned in U.S. supplements.
Garcinia cambogia	HCA, hydroxycitric acid; weight-loss products	Linked to serious liver injury.
Kratom		Acts like an opioid and a stimulant. If you use it daily, do not quit all at once. Ask your team how to taper safely.
Marijuana	Cannabis, THC; smoked, vaped, or eaten	Can affect clotting, your heart, your airway, and how much anesthesia you need. At the very least, avoid it for 3 days before surgery. Two weeks is better, especially if you smoke it.

This does not apply to FDA-approved prescription medicines made from cannabis. Ask your prescriber about those.

Be honest with your anesthesia team about marijuana, CBD, and kratom. They ask so they can keep you safe.



STOP 2 WEEKS BEFORE

Last dose 14 days before your surgery date

These 60 should be stopped 14 days before your surgery date. For many of them, no one knows how long they stay in the body, so 2 weeks is the safe default.

This applies to pills, capsules, powders, and extracts. Coffee, black tea, and green tea as drinks are fine. Tell your team how much caffeine you drink each day.

SUPPLEMENT	ALSO CALLED OR FOUND IN	MAIN CONCERN
Agaricus mushroom	Agaricus blazei	May lower blood sugar
Aloe (taken by mouth)	Aloe vera juice or capsules	May lower blood sugar. May raise bleeding risk. Aloe on the skin is likely fine.
Alpha-lipoic acid	ALA, lipoic acid	May lower blood sugar
American ginseng	Panax quinquefolius	May lower blood sugar. May affect clotting.
Andrographis	King of bitters	May lower blood pressure. May affect clotting.
Arnica	Arnica montana tablets or pellets	May raise bleeding risk. Some surgeons recommend arnica for bruising. Follow your surgeon's plan.
Banaba	Banaba leaf, corosolic acid	May lower blood sugar
Bitter melon	Karela, Momordica	May lower blood sugar
Bitter orange	Synephrine, Citrus aurantium; weight-loss products	May raise blood pressure
Black tea extract	Capsules or concentrates, not brewed tea	May raise bleeding risk. Contains caffeine, so cut back slowly.
Boldo	Boldo leaf	May raise bleeding risk. Can be hard on the liver.
Bromelain	Enzyme from pineapple stem and core	May raise bleeding risk
Caffeine supplements	Caffeine pills; some energy and pre-workout powders	Raises heart rate and blood pressure. Can affect blood sugar. Cut back slowly.
Casein peptides	Milk-protein peptides sold for blood pressure	May lower blood pressure
Cassia cinnamon	Cinnamon capsules or extract	May lower blood sugar
Cat's claw	Uña de gato	May raise bleeding risk

Chromium	Chromium picolinate	May lower blood sugar, especially with insulin
Coenzyme Q10	CoQ10, ubiquinone, ubiquinol	May lower blood pressure
Danshen	Red sage, Salvia miltiorrhiza	May raise bleeding risk. May lower blood pressure.
Devil's claw	Harpagophytum	May raise bleeding risk
Dong quai	Angelica sinensis	May raise bleeding risk
Echinacea		Interacts with many medicines. A concern if you need immune-suppressing medicine.
Evodia	Wu zhu yu	May raise bleeding risk
Fenugreek		May lower blood sugar. May raise bleeding risk.
Feverfew		May raise bleeding risk. Interacts with many medicines.
Garlic	Garlic pills, garlic oil, aged garlic extract	May raise bleeding risk
Ginger	Ginger capsules or extract	May raise bleeding risk
Ginkgo	Ginkgo biloba	May raise bleeding risk
Glucomannan	Konjac fiber	Slows how your body absorbs sugar
Goldenseal		Interacts with many medicines
Grapefruit extract	Grapefruit pills or concentrates	Interacts with many medicines
Guarana	Energy drinks and weight-loss products	May raise bleeding risk. Contains caffeine.
Gymnema	Gymnema sylvestre, gurma	May lower blood sugar
Horny goat weed	Epimedium	May lower blood pressure
Horse chestnut	Aescin; leg-vein products	May raise bleeding risk
Hu zhang	Japanese knotweed	Has many active compounds, including resveratrol
Indole-3-carbinol	I3C	Not enough safety information in people
Ipriflavone	Bone-health products	Not shown to prevent fractures. One report of a serious gut problem.
Kava	Kava kava	May add to the drowsy effects of anesthesia and pain medicine

Kola nut	Cola nut	Contains caffeine. The panel said to consider stopping. At the least, cut back slowly.
Lemon balm	Melissa	May add to the drowsy effects of anesthesia
Licorice root	Real licorice, glycyrrhizin	Can lower potassium and make your body hold fluid
Nettle	Stinging nettle	May lower blood pressure. Acts like a water pill.
Panax ginseng	Asian, Korean, or red ginseng	May lower blood sugar. May raise bleeding risk.
Policosanol	Sugar cane or rice bran wax extract	May raise bleeding risk
Prickly pear cactus	Nopal, Opuntia	May lower blood sugar
Pycnogenol	French maritime pine bark extract	May lower blood pressure
Quercetin		Interacts with some medicines
Red clover		May raise bleeding risk
Resveratrol		May raise bleeding risk
Saw palmetto		May raise bleeding risk
Schisandra	Five-flavor berry, wu wei zi	Interacts with many medicines. If you take anti-rejection medicine, ask your team before you stop.
Siberian ginseng	Eleuthero	May raise bleeding risk
Skullcap	Scutellaria	May add to the drowsy effects of anesthesia
St. John's wort	Hypericum	Changes how your body handles many medicines. Can raise serotonin. If you take prescription medicines, ask your team before you stop.
Turmeric	Curcumin	May raise bleeding risk
Vanadium	Vanadyl sulfate	May raise bleeding risk. May lower blood sugar.
Vitamin E	Tocopherol; also in many multivitamins	May raise bleeding risk
Yerba mate		Contains caffeine. Cut back slowly.
Yohimbine	Yohimbe	Can push blood pressure up or down

2

STOP 48 HOURS BEFORE

Last dose 2 days before surgery

These 2 leave the body faster, so 2 days is enough.

SUPPLEMENT	ALSO CALLED OR FOUND IN	MAIN CONCERN
Chondroitin	Joint-health products	May affect clotting. Can add to the effect of warfarin.
Glucosamine	Joint-health products	May affect clotting. Can add to the effect of warfarin.

6

STOP 24 HOURS BEFORE

Last dose no later than the day before surgery

These 6 need only a short stop. Take your last dose no later than the day before surgery, at least 24 hours ahead.

SUPPLEMENT	ALSO CALLED OR FOUND IN	MAIN CONCERN
5-HTP	5-hydroxytryptophan	Raises serotonin. Can react with some medicines used around surgery.
L-arginine*	Arginine; some pre-workout and nutrition drinks	May lower blood pressure during surgery
L-tryptophan	Tryptophan	Raises serotonin. May add to drowsiness.
N-acetylcysteine	NAC	May lower blood pressure during surgery
SAM-e	S-adenosylmethionine	Raises serotonin
Theanine	L-theanine	May lower blood pressure. May add to drowsiness.

*L-arginine is the only ingredient in PREP on this list. That is why PREP stops 24 hours before surgery.

Often stopped, but not by this panel: fish oil / omega-3, green tea extract, melatonin, passionflower, phenylalanine, German chamomile, hops, lavender, and valerian. The panel said these can usually be continued.

WHAT ABOUT FOOD?

Normal amounts of these foods in meals are fine. The expert statement reviewed supplements, not food, so the answers below are general clinical guidance and not part of that statement.

FOOD OR DRINK	BEFORE SURGERY	GOOD TO KNOW
Garlic, ginger, turmeric, cinnamon	Fine in meals	Normal amounts in cooking are fine. The concern is pills, extracts, and oils.
Fish	Fine in meals	Fish as a meal is fine.
Pineapple	Fine to eat	Eating the fruit is fine. The concern is the concentrated enzyme sold in capsules.
Coffee and tea	Fine in your usual amounts	Follow your team's rules about when to stop eating and drinking before surgery.
Ginger shots, turmeric shots, garlic oil	Stop 2 weeks before	Treat these like supplements.

IF YOU FORGOT TO STOP

Tell your surgical team right away. Say what you took, how much, and when you took the last dose.

- Do not cancel your surgery on your own, and do not hide it.
- Your team will decide based on your surgery. For many procedures, they can go ahead and watch you more closely.
- For surgeries where bleeding would be dangerous, such as brain or spine surgery, they may choose to wait.

STARTING AGAIN AFTER SURGERY

Ask your surgical team before you restart anything. Supplements that affect bleeding should wait until your team says the bleeding risk is low.

WHERE THIS LIST COMES FROM

Every stop time in the supplement tables comes from one published expert statement. This list re-sorts those recommendations by timing and explains them in plain language. No stop time was changed.

Cummings KC III, Keshock M, Ganesh R, et al. Preoperative Management of Surgical Patients Using Dietary Supplements: Society for Perioperative Assessment and Quality Improvement (SPAQI) Consensus Statement. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*. 2021;96(5):1342-1355.
[doi:10.1016/j.mayocp.2020.08.016](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mayocp.2020.08.016)

- A panel of eight physician experts in anesthesiology and internal medicine reviewed the research and voted on each supplement.
- Strong studies do not exist for most supplements. When data were missing, the panel chose 2 weeks to be safe.
- Products with several ingredients were not reviewed one by one.

As of October 2026, SPAQI has not published an update to this statement, and we found no newer society statement on supplements before surgery.

This list is general education. It is not medical advice, and it does not replace instructions from your own surgical team. SPAQI and Mayo Clinic Proceedings have not reviewed or endorsed this version.