

## Clinical Protocol Training

### Lesson 2: What are Protocols and How to Use Them – Supplemental materials

#### Pay Attention to Natural Supplements

In a culture where green and organic living is increasing, natural supplements are a major part of the trend. Despite the popularity, for many supplements there is little evidence if any that they are effective. In fact, some supplements may even be harmful. While companies market and label the product as “natural,” it does not mean that they are safe. Unlike prescription medications, natural supplements do not need to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Natural supplements are not regulated or tested like products that are FDA approved.

More importantly, medical professionals need to be aware of this growing trend and keep it in mind when treating patients. Clinics and Hospitals are becoming more accustomed to inquiring about natural supplements and vitamins while triaging their patients. This information is just as important as a patient’s medication list, because even natural supplements have effects that a doctor or nurse may need to consider.

According to Dr. Ravi Raheja, “Often times, patients are looking for a natural remedy for their ailments. As a physician, I must stress how important it is to speak with your doctor, first. Some supplements may actually interact or hinder the efficacy of certain medications.”

A couple examples that WebMd includes in their article, 5 Risky Herbal Supplements, are St. John’s Wort and Chapparral. St. John’s Wort is commonly used to help with depression. However, this herbal supplement hinders the efficacy of some prescription medications. Chapparral is used to reduce pain, inflammation, and skin irritation. This supplement can cause severe liver damage and has interactions with both over-the-counter medications and certain prescription drugs.

As for pediatrics, gripe water and teething tablets are a popular choice for parents. Rather than give their infant an over-the-counter pain reliever, parents sometimes feel safer choosing a natural supplement. Gripe water is a popular remedy for infant gas and colic. A concerning ingredient often found in gripe water is alcohol. When triaging pediatric patients, it is best to ask parents if they are treating their children with natural supplements. Parents may not think it is important information to provide due to the “natural” labeling of these products.

Overall, natural supplements should never be overlooked when triaging a patient. The use of natural or herbal supplements is relevant information to include in a patient’s medical profile.