

## "Buyer Beware"



April 2006

Volume 2, Issue 4

### Supplements & Medications—Be Careful

Leighanna Konetski,  
Community Nutritionist

Supplement options are growing and growing—not only at health food stores but also at large retail grocery stores.

You can get supplements added to beverages, bars, cereals, even water! Many offer promising claims to better health, younger looking skin, etc. These products are purchased at your own risk, or "buyer beware." Many of the supplements available over the counter have negative effects on medications. People who are on prescription medications, dealing with chronic health problems or preparing for surgery should be especially careful when taking supplements. If you choose to use supplements always let your doctor and pharmacist



know which ones you take. The following list are just **some** examples of supplement and medication interactions that could be harmful.

- ⇒ Vitamin E, garlic, ginkgo biloba, as well as aspirin and Coumadin (prescription drug) are blood thinners. Combining supplements and drugs that have similar actions (i.e. blood thinning) is not a good idea.
- ⇒ St. John's wort can make prescription drugs for treating heart disease, depression, certain cancers, or seizures, less effective.
- ⇒ Garlic, ginkgo biloba, kava, St. John's wort, and valerian can change your heart rate, blood pressure, and increase bleeding—risky for surgery.

#### **Inside this Issue:**

Supplements	1
Crossword Fun	2
Quick Fix	3
Lou's Tip	3
Grapefruit	4



#### **Remember:**

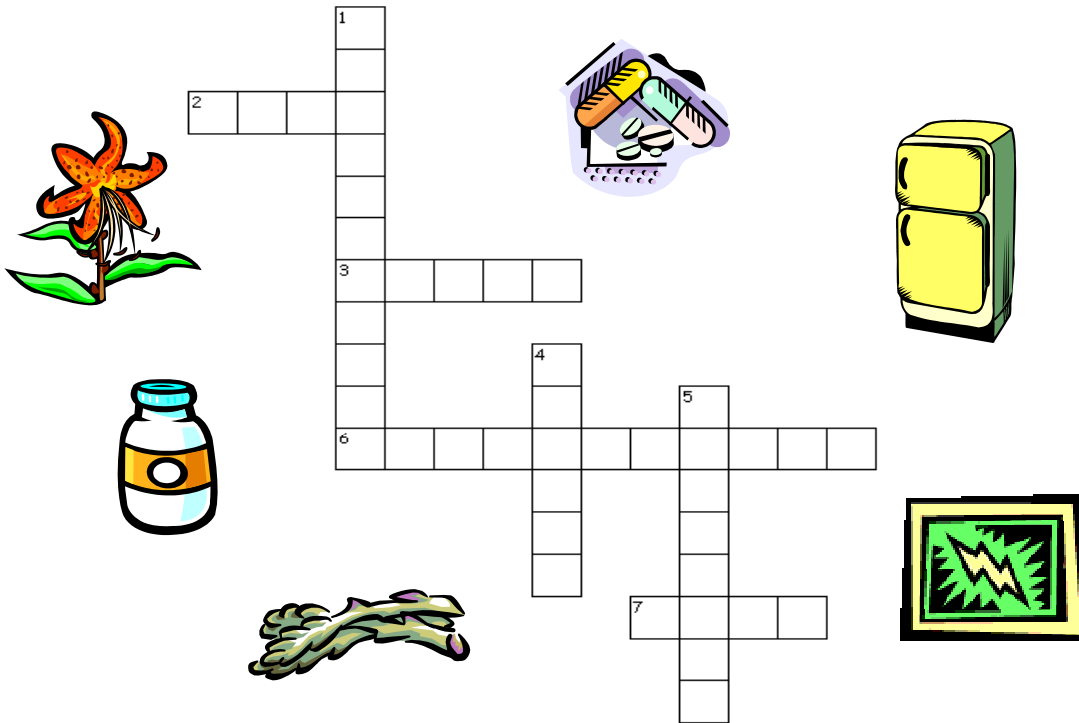
***Always*** let your doctor and pharmacist know what supplements you are taking.

#### **Did You Know?**

- ◆ Asparagus is a good source of vitamin C and folate and is a part of the lily family.



# April Crossword Fun



**Use this newsletter to solve the above crossword.**

**Across**

2. When the power goes out, keep the trapped \_\_\_\_ air in. Don't open refrigerator or freezer doors.

3. When in doubt about the quality of a refrigerated food \_\_\_\_ it out.

6. Always let your doctor and pharmacist know what \_\_\_\_\_ you are taking.

7. Asparagus is part of the \_\_\_\_\_ family.

**Down**

1. Certain \_\_\_\_\_ have a negative interaction with grapefruit or grapefruit juice.

4. Asparagus is a good source of vitamin C and \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Many of the supplements available over the counter have \_\_\_\_\_ effects on medications.



Answer's to last months crossword. **Across:** 1. Balance 5. Protein 6. Sugar  
7. MyPyramid **Down:** 2. Nutrition 3. Hands 4. Being

# Quick Fix Recipe of the Month

## Tarragon Asparagus

**Yield: 4 servings**  
**Serving Size: 1/2 cup**



### Ingredients:

- 1 pound fresh asparagus spears
- Non-fat butter spray
- 1 tablespoon tarragon
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

### Method:

1. Wash asparagus and break off at tender point.
2. Steam asparagus over boiling water for 6 minutes or until barely tender. (You can also do this in the microwave by using a little water and covering the dish with plastic wrap).
3. Remove from heat and drain.
4. Spray with butter spray and sprinkle with tarragon and pepper.

*Recipe taken from the 'Low Fat & Light  
 Four Ingredient Cookbook'*

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1/2 cup (115g)  
 Servings Per Container 4

### Amount Per Serving

**Calories 25**      **Calories from Fat 0**

% Daily Value\*

**Total Fat 0g**      **0%**

Saturated Fat 0g      **0%**

**Cholesterol 0mg**      **0%**

**Sodium 0mg**      **0%**

**Total Carbohydrate 5g**      **2%**

Dietary Fiber 2g      **8%**

Sugars 2g

### Protein 3g

Vitamin A 20%      • Vitamin C 10%

Calcium 4%      • Iron 15%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

		Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less Than	65g	80g	
Saturated Fat	Less Than	20g	25g	
Cholesterol	Less Than	300mg	300 mg	
Sodium	Less Than	2,400mg	2,400mg	
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g	
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g	

Calories per gram:

Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

## Food Safety Tip of the Month: When the Lights Go Out

April showers bring May flowers, and an occasional power outage. When the lights go out for any extended period of time, you run the risk of losing highly perishable foods in your refrigerator and freezer. Follow these simple steps to keep cold foods cold and frozen foods frozen as long as possible.



1. Keep the trapped cold air in. Don't open the freezer or refrigerator doors if at all possible.
2. Food will stay chilled in a refrigerator without power for up to 6 hours.
3. Once the power comes back on, check all foods to make sure they are still safe to eat. If in doubt, throw it out!



Volunteers of America  
2660 Larimer Street  
Denver, CO 80205

Phone: 303-297-0408  
Fax: 720-264-3306

Leighanna Konetski, Community  
Nutritionist

Dawn Hasebroock, RD

Email: [lkonetski@voacolorado.org](mailto:lkonetski@voacolorado.org)  
[dhasebroock@voacolorado.org](mailto:dhasebroock@voacolorado.org)

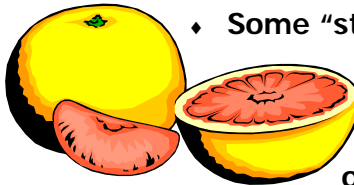
**We're on the web!**  
[www.voacolorado.org](http://www.voacolorado.org)

The Volunteers of America is a national non-profit, spiritually-based human services organization. Since 1896 Volunteers of America Colorado Branch has been seeking to identify and serve the basic needs of the most vulnerable individuals and families in our community. If you would like information on how you can get involved, please call us at: 303-297-0408.

*The Nutrition Services Division is funded in part by the Denver Regional Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging.*

## Grapefruit & Some Medications Don't Mix

Grapefruit, a wonderfully tart citrus fruit, can pack more than just a tart punch. Some medications have a negative interaction with grapefruit and grapefruit juice. Certain compounds in grapefruit may cause some medications to not be absorbed or processed, and may even interfere with the body's ability to get rid of the medicine. This leads to high levels of these medications in the blood, which could actually cause you to "overdose" on the medication. This greatly increases your risk to dangerous side effects of the medication. A list of **some** of the medications where grapefruit should be avoided are:



- ◆ **Selected calcium channel blockers** (Plendil, Adalat, Procardia, Nimotop, Sular)

- ◆ **Some "statins" cholesterol lowering drugs** (Zocor, Mevacor, Lipitor, Vytorin)
- ◆ **Some antidepressants or psychiatric medications** (BuSpar, Anafranil, Zoloft)

Because new medicines are coming on the market on a daily basis, the only way to know for sure if any of your medications interact negatively with grapefruit is to ask your doctor or pharmacist. If grapefruit or grapefruit juice is one of your favorite treats, be sure to mention that to your doctor or pharmacist and ask them to double check that your medicines don't interact negatively with it. Remember, to be an active member of your healthcare team—keep an open dialog between you, your doctor, and your pharmacist.