

My vitamin C pharmacist question card

For a vitamin C product or a vein product that contains vitamin C. Fill in the card before you talk with a pharmacist. This card stays with you; nothing is sent anywhere.

Safety first. NHLBI says to call 911 if you see any bleeding from varicose veins, because this is a medical emergency. Call 911 for severe chest pain or pressure, severe shortness of breath, suddenly not being able to speak, see, walk or move, or suddenly being weak or drooping on one side of the body. Difficulty breathing, or chest pain or discomfort that gets worse with a deep breath or coughing, can be signs of a blood clot in the lungs (pulmonary embolism), which CDC says needs immediate medical attention. Do not wait for a routine callback from your provider: go to an emergency department or call 911 or your local emergency number for help. Call your healthcare provider right away for a swollen, tender leg that is painful to the touch, which can be a sign of a blood clot in a deep vein (deep vein thrombosis); CDC says this needs prompt medical attention. This card is general education. It does not say whether to take vitamin C or how much, and it is not a reason to start, stop or change any medicine without your doctor.

Product and health details

- Product name and maker, exactly as on the label

- What the label says the product is for, in its own words

- Form of vitamin C listed, such as ascorbic acid, sodium ascorbate, calcium ascorbate or ascorbic acid with bioflavonoids

- Every other ingredient listed on the label

- Amount of vitamin C per serving, as printed on the label

- Other products I use that contain vitamin C, such as a multivitamin or fortified drink

- Every prescription and nonprescription medicine I take

- Other supplements I take

- Health conditions I have, such as hemochromatosis, kidney stones or kidney problems

- Cancer treatment, a vein procedure or another surgery that I am having or have planned

About this product

1. Is this product sold as a dietary supplement or as a medicine, and what does that mean for how it was checked before sale?

2. Is the wording on the label a statement about normal body function or a claim to treat or prevent a disease?

3. Which ingredients besides vitamin C does it contain, and what is known about each one?

4. Has this exact product, rather than vitamin C in general, been tested in people with vein problems?

About my medicines and health

5. Could anything in this product interact with my medicines, including cancer treatment or a statin taken with niacin?

6. Is anything in this product a concern with my health conditions, such as hemochromatosis or kidney problems?

7. Counting food, drinks and my other products, how does my total vitamin C compare with the upper limit?

8. I have a vein procedure or other surgery planned. Should my care team know about this product before then?

9. Which side effects should I report to you or my doctor?

To take to my doctor

10. What is causing my varicose veins, and which treatments might fit my situation?

11. Is there any reason a vitamin C or vein product would be a problem for me?

Bring with you

- This card with the fields filled in
- The product, or a clear photo of every side of its label
- A list of every medicine and supplement you take

My notes

Sources

NIH Office of Dietary Supplements: Vitamin C fact sheets for consumers and health professionals (ods.od.nih.gov). FDA: Structure/function claims; Information for consumers on using dietary supplements (fda.gov). NCCIH: Using dietary supplements wisely (nccih.nih.gov). NHLBI: Varicose veins; Venous thromboembolism (nhlbi.nih.gov). MedlinePlus: Varicose veins; When to use the emergency room (medlineplus.gov). CDC: About venous thromboembolism (blood clots) (cdc.gov). Your pharmacist and doctor decide what applies to you.

From the Cardio Guardian Editorial Team. Online version: getcardioguardian.com/insights/vitamin-c-and-varicose-veins/