

What You Need to Know About Taking Boswellia

This handout offers information on Boswellia. Boswellia (also known as Frankincense) is a natural health product your radiation oncologist has recommended you take to help reduce the swelling of your brain. Radiation treatment to your brain may cause your brain to swell as it reacts to the treatment. This can happen a few weeks or even months after your radiation treatment is finished.

Swelling of your brain may cause symptoms like:

- Headaches
- Feeling sick to your stomach (nausea)
- Worsening of a symptom(s) you already have (like weakness or trouble speaking)
- Feeling more tired than what is normal for you

The symptoms you have depends on which part of your brain was treated with radiation.

What do you need to know about Boswellia?

- When purchasing Boswellia, make sure it contains only Boswellia and has no other added active, herbal, or natural ingredients. Check that it has a Natural Product Number (NPN) on the label. An NPN is an eight-digit code issued by Health Canada. It proves that a natural health product is licensed, safe, and legal to sell in Canada. You can verify any supplement by entering its number into the Licensed Natural Health Products Database found at <https://health-products.canada.ca/lnhpd-bdpsnh/?lang=eng>
- Take Boswellia with a fatty snack. Boswellia contains boswellic acids, which are fat-soluble. Taking it with a snack that contains fat can help your body absorb it better. Examples include cheese, peanut butter, or yogurt.
- Common side effects include: mild stomach upset, nausea, acid reflux, and diarrhea.
- It is important you tell your radiation oncologist if you're taking blood thinners as Boswellia may increase your risk of bleeding.

How much Boswellia should I take?

Your radiation oncologist will tell you how much Boswellia to take.