

**Table 7.3. Selected Non-Prescription Therapies for Menopausal Symptoms**

Name	Use	Dose	Comments
Black cohosh (cimifuga racemosa, remifemin) <sup>13,15</sup>	Vasomotor symptoms	20 mg tablet twice daily	<p><b>Side effects:</b> nausea, vomiting, bradycardia, hypotension, increased perspiration</p> <p><b>Interactions:</b> anesthetics, antihypertensives, sedatives (may increase hypotensive effect)</p> <p>Estrogen supplements, hormonal contraceptives (may increase effects or compete with ERT for estrogen receptors, reducing effects of both therapies)</p> <p><b>Contraindications:</b> Patients with a history of estrogen-dependent tumours (estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer), uterine cancer, or thromboembolic disorders</p> <p><b>Special considerations:</b> Monitor blood pressure closely in hypertensive patients on an anti-hypertensive or sedative. Discontinue black cohosh 2 weeks before surgery to avoid hypotensive reactions with anesthetics.</p>
Red clover-derived isoflavone (Promensil) <sup>13,14,16</sup>	Vasomotor symptoms	80 mg tablet daily (DIN available)	<p><b>Side effects:</b> breast tenderness, breast enlargement, weight gain</p> <p><b>Interactions:</b> anticoagulants (heparin, warfarin), antiplatelet drugs (aspirin, clopidogrel, ticlopidine), increase risk, of bleeding</p> <p>hormonal contraceptives increase effects by increasing estrogen components.</p> <p><b>Contraindications:</b> Patients with estrogen receptor-positive neoplasia</p> <p><b>Special considerations:</b> Use cautiously in patients susceptible to bleeding problems or those on anticoagulants.</p> <p>Discontinue red clover-derived isoflavone 2 weeks before surgery.</p>
Vitamin E (tocopherol) <sup>17,18</sup>	Vasomotor symptoms	800 IU daily DIN available)	<p>Slight decrease in hot flash frequency (1 less hot flash per day). Long-term use of vitamin E of doses 400 IU increases all-cause mortality.<sup>18</sup></p> <p><b>Side effects:</b> Vitamin E has anticoagulant properties. Increased risk for hemorrhagic stroke.</p> <p><b>Interactions:</b> May displace other fat-soluble antioxidants disrupting the natural balance of antioxidant systems.</p> <p><b>Special considerations:</b> Use cautiously in patients susceptible to bleeding problems or those on anticoagulants.</p> <p>Discontinue 2 weeks before surgery.</p>
St. John's Wort (hypericum perforatum) <sup>15,19,20</sup>	Mild to moderate depression	300 mg 3 times daily (DIN available)	<p><b>Side effects:</b> dizziness, restlessness, sleep disturbance, dry mouth, constipation, nausea, diarrhea, phototoxicity of skin, allergic hypersensitivity.</p> <p><b>Interactions:</b> alcohol, MAO inhibitors, SSRIs, narcotics, over-the-counter cold and flu medications, sympathomimetics, tyramine-containing foods, digoxin, warfarin, theophylline, indinavir, cyclosporin, drugs metabolized by CYP3A reduces their activity</p> <p><b>Contraindications:</b> MAO inhibitors, SSRIs, history of allergy to St. John's Wort</p> <p><b>Special considerations:</b> Exercise caution when using with drugs metabolized by CYP3A (reduces their activity).</p>
Valerian (valerian officinalis) <sup>15,21-25</sup>	Sleep disturbances	400–900 mg at bedtime (DIN available)	<p><b>Side effects:</b> excitability, headache, cardiac disturbances, blurred vision, nausea, hepatotoxicity, hypersensitivity reactions</p> <p><b>Interactions:</b> alcohol, CNS depressants, additive effects with sedatives or hypnotics.</p> <p><b>Contraindications:</b> patients with hepatic dysfunction, patients on other sedatives, hypnotics or those with alcohol dependency</p> <p><b>Special considerations:</b> Discontinue 2 weeks prior to surgery</p>