

**Table 7.4. Products Where Available Data Does Not Support Use for Menopausal Symptoms**

Name	Use	Dose	Comments
Kava (kavapyrone) <sup>15,26-28</sup>	Anxiety	70–110 mg t.i.d.  (No agreed-upon standards exist. Formulations of kava vary in their actual content.)	<b>Side effects:</b> headache, dizziness, changes in judgment and motor reflexes, vision changes, hypertension, diarrhea, liver damage including hepatitis and liver failure, blood dyscrasias (decreased platelet and lymphocyte counts), weight loss, shortness of breath, hypersensitivity reactions of the skin, reddened eyes, galactorrhea and breast engorgement <b>Interactions:</b> alcohol (increases kava toxicity), alprazolam (may cause coma), benzodiazepines (causes additive sedative effects), digoxin (increases digoxin toxicity), levodopa (increases parkinsonian symptoms), phenobarbital (additive effects). <b>Contraindications:</b> Avoid administration with psychotropic drugs. Use cautiously in patients with neutropenia, renal disease or thrombocytopenia. Do not use in patients with liver disease. <b>Special considerations:</b> Safety information has not been routinely collected. Significant adverse reactions may occur with long-term use. Caution patient to avoid alcohol and other CNS depressants, as they enhance kava's sedative and toxic effects. Absorption of kava may be enhanced if taken with food.
Soy-derived isoflavones, genistein, and daidzein <sup>13,14</sup>	Vasomotor symptoms	25–40 mg daily	Randomized, controlled clinical trials have shown that hot flashes are not reduced or only slightly diminished in women who consume soy extracts or soy foods. <sup>13,14</sup> <b>Side effects:</b> breast tenderness, breast enlargement, flatulence <b>Interactions:</b> Administration of levothyroxine concurrently with soy protein results in decreased absorption of levothyroxine. Do not administer together. <b>Contraindications:</b> Patients who are sensitive to soy products and those with estrogen dependent tumours.
Chaste tree (Vitex) <sup>15</sup>	Vaginal dryness, depression, mastalgia	20 mg capsule daily	Human data supporting claims are sparse.
DHEA <sup>15</sup>	Vasomotor symptoms	Variable	DHEA doses over 25 mg/d should be avoided in women because of reports of irreversible voice changes and hirsutism. Data lacking about proper dose and long-term effects. <b>Side effects:</b> headache, acne, hair loss, hirsutism, oily skin
Wild yam <sup>29</sup>	Menopausal symptoms	Variable (topical)	Little effect on symptoms
Ginkgo biloba <sup>30</sup>	Memory impairment	120–240 mg in divided doses (DIN available)	Available data does not support use in healthy adults with normal cognition. <b>Side effects:</b> headache, GI upset, insomnia, skin reaction, bleeding <b>Interactions:</b> anticoagulants, antiplatelets, insulin, oral hypoglycemics (causes elevated blood glucose levels)
Ginseng (Panax ginseng) <sup>15,31</sup>	Cognitive function	No consistent dose recommendations	Available data does not support use. No consistent quality control. No consistent dose or formulation recommendations. <b>Side effects:</b> headache, insomnia, nervousness, epistaxis, hypertension, palpitations, GI upset, mastalgia, vaginal bleeding, pruritus <b>Interactions:</b> anticoagulants, insulin, diabetic drugs <b>Contraindications:</b> MAO inhibitors
Dong quai <sup>15,31</sup>	Vasomotor symptoms	500 mg t.i.d.	Available data does not support use <b>Side effects:</b> bleeding, increased skin photosensitivity, diarrhea <b>Interactions:</b> anticoagulants, antiplatelets
Evening primrose oil <sup>13,32</sup>	Vasomotor symptoms	3–4 g/d	Available data does not support use. No benefit over placebo for vasomotor symptoms. <b>Side effects:</b> headache, nausea, rash <b>Interactions:</b> phenothiazines (increased risk of seizures)