

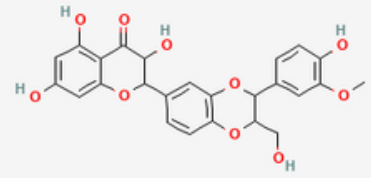
# MILK THISTLE

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Silybum marianum*

**COMMON NAME:** Milk Thistle

**PART USED:** Seed or Fruit

**ACTIVE INGREDIENTS:** (Silymarin) Silybin, Silydianin, Isosilybin



## CLINICAL APPLICATIONS IN ONCOLOGY

### Oral Silymarin

- Liver toxicity: In children with ALL and liver toxicity, MT was associated with a trend toward significant reductions in liver toxicity. MT did not antagonize the effects of chemotherapy agents used for the treatment of ALL. (1) Reduction in severity of hepatotoxicity of Doxorubicin/cyclophosphamide-paclitaxel (AC-T) regimen. (2)
- Gastrointestinal toxicity: Simultaneous administration of silymarin is a potentially effective supplementation for reducing toxicities in mCRC patients undergoing first-line FOLFIRI plus bevacizumab, especially in diarrhea and nausea. (3)

### Topical silymarin

- Radiotherapy-induced mucositis: Prophylactic administration of conventional form of silymarin tablets could significantly reduce the severity of radiotherapy-induced mucositis and delay its occurrence in patients with head and neck cancer. (4)
- Radiodermatitis: Prophylactic administration of silymarin gel could significantly reduce the severity of radiodermatitis and delay its occurrence after 5 weeks of application. (5)
- Hand and Foot Syndrome (HFS): Prophylactic administration of silymarin topical formulation could significantly reduce the severity of capecitabine-induced HFS and delay its occurrence in patients with gastrointestinal cancer after 9 weeks of application. (6)

## MECHANISM OF ACTION

### 1. Proliferation

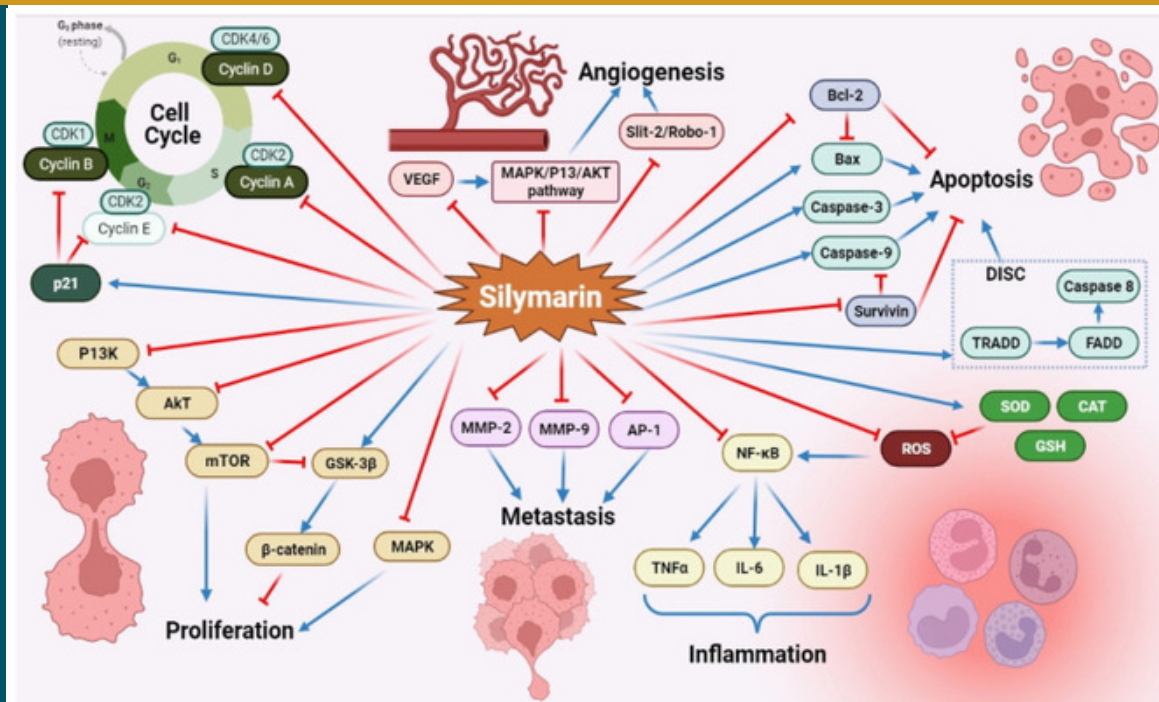
- ↓PI3K-PKB/Akt signaling pathway (15)
- ↓MAPK/ERK1/2 and MAPK/p38 signaling pathway (16)
- ↓PP2A/AKT/mTOR (17)
- ↓MEK/ERK (18)
- ↓ERK1/2 signaling pathway(19), (20)
- ↑JNK1/2 and p38 (20)
- ↑GSK-3β (21)

### 2. Metastasis

- ↓MMP-2 and MMP-9 levels (22)
- ↓AP-1(22), (21)
- ↓APAF-1 (23)

### 3. Inflammation

- ↓Inflammatory mediators (nitric oxide, TNF-α, IL-6, IL-1β, COX-2, iNOS, and NF-κB) (24)
- 4. Apoptosis
- ↓Bcl-2-mediated anti-apoptosis (16), (18), (25)
- ↓p53, ↑ Bax mediated apoptosis (23), (25)
- ↑Bim-mediated apoptosis (19)
- ↓Survivin (26)



**FIGURE A. The effect of Silymarin on multiple targets to exert antitumor effect**

- ↑Caspase-9 (27) caspase-3, -8 (28), (29)
- ↑BCL2L11 (30)

### 5. Angiogenesis

- ↓MAPK/P13/AKT (31), (25)
- ↓Slit-2/Robo-1 pathway (21), (32)
- ↓VEGF protein expression (33)
- ↑MiR-20b (30)
- ↓ Notch pathway (34)
- ↓Wnt/β-catenin signaling pathway (31)

### 6. Cell cycle

- ↓Cyclin D1 (35)
- ↑p53, p21, and p27 protein expression, and ↓CDK2 protein expression (29), (33)
- ↓G1/S transition phase of the cell cycle (29)
- ↓CDK, (31)
- ↓DNA (TOPBP1), (NUSAP1) and (CDCA3), which are important for mitotic progression and regulation (36)

**Clinical Properties:** Antioxidant, (7) hepatoprotective, (8) anti-inflammatory, (9) immunomodulatory, (10) antiviral, (11) and antifibrotic (12)

**Safety:** -No adverse reaction was reported by silymarin administration at 420 mg daily in three divided doses. (13) 13 g of oral silybin-phytosome daily, in 3 divided doses, appears to be well tolerated in patients with advanced prostate cancer and is the recommended phase II dose. Asymptomatic liver toxicity was the most commonly seen adverse event. (14)

# ROLE OF SILYMARIN IN CHEMOTHERAPY-INDUCED HEPATOTOXICITY

## 1- Reduction of oxidative stress:

The reactive oxygen species produced in cancer induce oxidative stress in the body. This stress is:

- Directly reduced by silymarin.
- Reduced by activation of Heme-oxygenase 1(HO-1). (37)
- Reduced by stimulation of CAT,SOD, and GSH. (38), (39)

## 2- Decrease in inflammation:

Milk thistle reduces inflammation by:

- Directly inhibiting IL-1 $\beta$ , IL-6, and TNF- $\alpha$  produced by Nf-kB activation. (38)
- Upregulating Nrf2 which decreases the levels of IL-1 $\beta$ , IL-6 and TNF- $\alpha$ . (40)

## 3- Inhibits chemotherapy-induced apoptosis

Chemotherapy can cause unnecessary cell death of hepatocytes. Milk thistle regulates apoptosis-associated genes by:

- Negatively regulating pro-apoptotic proteins, caspase-3 and Bax. (41)
- Upregulating anti-apoptotic genes like Bcl-2. (41)

## 4- Inhibition of fibrogenesis:

- Inhibits MCP-1 (Monocyte Chemoattractant Protein-1), suppressing the recruitment of monocytes and macrophages. (42), (43)
- Inhibits kupffer cells either directly, or kupffer cells, toxins and macrophage mediated activation of inflammatory markers. (43)

- Blocks activation of Hepatic Stellate Cells (HSCs), a key trigger for fibrogenesis. (42), (44)
  - Downregulates fibrogenic markers, including MMP-13, MMP-2, TIMP-1, TIMP-2,  $\alpha$ -SMA, and COL- $\alpha$ 1 to prevent altered Extracellular Matrix (ECM) degradation and remodeling. (42), (44)
  - Upregulates PPAR- $\alpha$ , leading to the inactivation of HSCs and promoting hepatoprotective effects. (37), (38)
- ## 5- Decrease in hepatic enzymes induced by chemotherapy:

- Urea, creatinine, ALT, AST, and total bilirubin levels increased by chemotherapy were reduced by silymarin. (45)

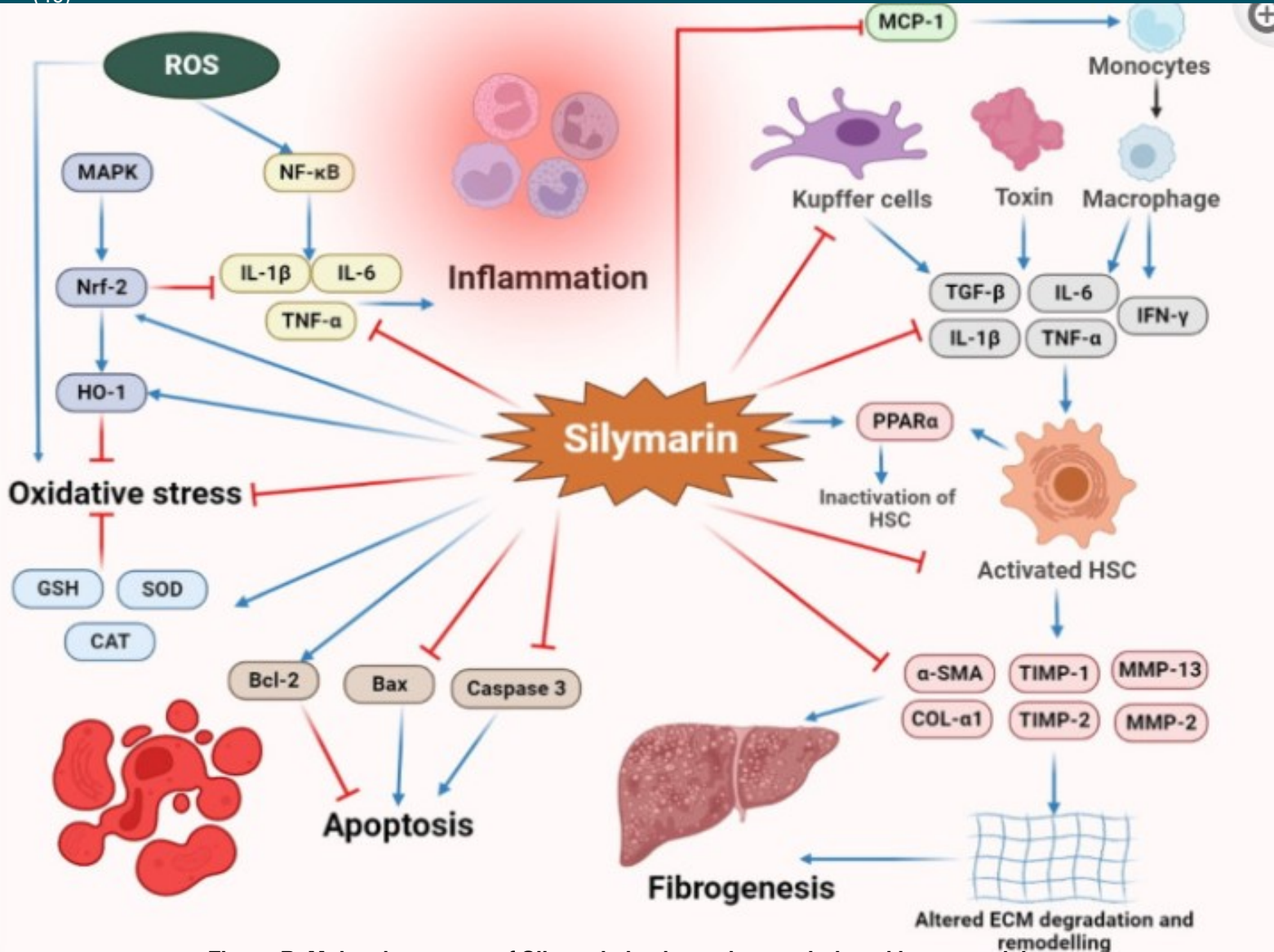


Figure B. Molecular targets of Silymarin in chemotherapy-induced hepatotoxicity.

## DOSE RECOMMENDED IN PUBLISHED CLINICAL TRIALS OF CANCER

Oral silymarin 140 mg three times a day (750mg silymarin). (2)

## PUROBEST MILK THISTLE RECOMMENDED DOSAGE

One to two capsules of Purobest Milk Thistle once a day or as recommended by the healthcare practitioner.

**Formulation Characteristics:** One capsule of Purobest Milk Thistle contains 500mg silymarin. Third quality testing ensures the quality and purity of silymarin in Purobest Milk Thistle.



## REFERENCES

- Karbasforooshan H, Hosseini S, Elyasi S, Fani Pakdel A, Karimi G. Topical silymarin administration for prevention of acute radiodermatitis in breast cancer patients: A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial. *Phytother Res PTR*. 2019 Feb;33(2):379–86.
- Elyasi S, Hosseini S, Niazi Moghadam MR, Aledavood SA, Karimi G. Effect of Oral Silymarin Administration on Prevention of Radiotherapy Induced Mucositis: A Randomized, Double-Blinded, Placebo-Controlled Clinical Trial. *Phytother Res PTR*. 2016 Nov;30(11):1879–85.
- Ladas EJ, Kroll DJ, Oberlies NH, Cheng B, Ndao DH, Rheingold SR, et al. A randomized, controlled, double-blind, pilot study of milk thistle for the treatment of hepatotoxicity in childhood acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). *Cancer*. 2010 Jan 15;116(2):506–13.
- Chang TK, Yin TC, Su WC, Tsai HL, Huang CW, Chen YC, et al. A Pilot Study of Silymarin as Supplementation to Reduce Toxicities in Metastatic Colorectal Cancer Patients Treated With First-Line FOLFIRI Plus Bevacizumab. *Oncol Res Featur Preclin Clin Cancer Ther*. 2021 Sep 7;28(7):801–9.
- Elyasi S, Shojaaee FSR, Allahyari A, Karimi G. Topical Silymarin Administration for Prevention of Capecitabine-Induced Hand–Foot Syndrome: A Randomized, Double-Blinded, Placebo-Controlled Clinical Trial. *Phytother Res*. 2017 Sep;31(9):1323–9.
- Moezian GSA, Javadinia SA, Sales SS, Fanipakdel A, Elyasi S, Karimi G. Oral silymarin formulation efficacy in management of AC-T protocol induced hepatotoxicity in breast cancer patients: A randomized, triple blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial. *J Oncol Pharm Pract*. 2022 Jun;28(4):827–35.
- Grant JE, Redden SA, Chamberlain SR. Milk Thistle Treatment for Children and Adults with Trichotillomania: A Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Crossover Negative Study. *J Clin Psychopharmacol*. 2019;39(2):129–34.
- Navarro VJ, Belle SH, D'Amato M, Adfhal N, Brunt EM, Fried MW, et al. Silymarin in non-cirrhotics with non-alcoholic steatohepatitis: A randomized, double-blind, placebo controlled trial. *PLoS One*. 2019;14(9):e0221683.
- Ebrahimpour Koujan S, Gargari BP, Mobasseri M, Valizadeh H, Asghari-Jafarabadi M. Effects of Silybum marianum (L.) Gaertn. (silymarin) extract supplementation on antioxidant status and hs-CRP in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus: a randomized, triple-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial. *Phytomedicine Int J Phytother Phytofarm*. 2015 Feb 15;22(2):290–6.
- Adeyemo O, Doi H, Rajender Reddy K, Kaplan DE. Impact of oral silymarin on virus- and non-virus-specific T-cell responses in chronic hepatitis C infection. *J Viral Hepat*. 2013 Jul;20(7):453–62.
- Mariño Z, Crespo G, D'Amato M, Brambilla N, Giacovelli G, Rovati L, et al. Intravenous silibinin monotherapy shows significant antiviral activity in HCV-infected patients in the peri-transplantation period. *J Hepatol*. 2013 Mar;58(3):415–20.
- Angulo P, Patel T, Jorgensen RA, Therneau TM, Lindor KD. Silymarin in the treatment of patients with primary biliary cirrhosis with a suboptimal response to ursodeoxycholic acid. *Hepatol Baltim Md*. 2000 Nov;32(5):897–900.
- Shahbazi F, Sadighi S, Dashti-Khavidaki S, Shahi F, Mirzania M, Abdollahi A, et al. Effect of Silymarin Administration on Cisplatin Nephrotoxicity: Report from A Pilot, Randomized, Double-Blinded, Placebo-Controlled Clinical Trial. *Phytother Res PTR*. 2015 Jul;29(7):1046–53.
- Flaig TW, Gustafson DL, Su LJ, Zirrolli JA, Crighton F, Harrison GS, et al. A phase I and pharmacokinetic study of silybin-phytosome in prostate cancer patients. *Invest New Drugs*. 2007 Apr;25(2):139–46.
- Imai-Sumida M, Chiyomaru T, Majid S, Saini S, Nip H, Dahiya R, et al. Silibinin suppresses bladder cancer through down-regulation of actin cytoskeleton and PI3K/Akt signaling pathways. *Oncotarget*. 2017 Nov 3;8(54):92032–42.
- Huang Q, Wu LJ, Tashiro SI, Onodera S, Li LH, Ikejima T. Silymarin augments human cervical cancer HeLa cell apoptosis via P38/JNK MAPK pathways in serum-free medium. *J Asian Nat Prod Res*. 2005 Oct;7(5):701–9.
- Wang JY, Chang CC, Chiang CC, Chen WM, Hung SC. Silibinin suppresses the maintenance of colorectal cancer stem-like cells by inhibiting PP2A/AKT/mTOR pathways. *J Cell Biochem*. 2012 May;113(5):1733–43.
- Kim SH, Choo GS, Yoo ES, Woo JS, Lee JH, Han SH, et al. Silymarin inhibits proliferation of human breast cancer cells via regulation of the MAPK signaling pathway and induction of apoptosis. *Oncol Lett*. 2021 Jun;21(6):492.
- Choi ES, Oh S, Jang B, Yu HJ, Shin JA, Cho NP, et al. Silymarin and its active component silibinin act as novel therapeutic alternatives for salivary gland cancer by targeting the ERK1/2-Bim signaling cascade. *Cell Oncol Dordr*. 2017 Jun;40(3):235–46.
- Singh RP, Tyagi AK, Zhao J, Agarwal R. Silymarin inhibits growth and causes regression of established skin tumors in SENCAR mice via modulation of mitogen-activated protein kinases and induction of apoptosis. *Carcinogenesis*. 2002 Mar;23(3):499–510.
- Bektur Aykanat NE, Kacar S, Karakaya S, Sahinturk V. Silymarin suppresses HepG2 hepatocarcinoma cell progression through downregulation of Slit-2/Robo-1 pathway. *Pharmacol Rep PR*. 2020 Feb;72(1):199–207.
- Garces de Los Fayos Alonso I, Liang HC, Turner SD, Lagger S, Merkel O, Kenner L. The Role of Activator Protein-1 (AP-1) Family Members in CD30-Positive Lymphomas. *Cancers*. 2018 Mar 28;10(4):93.
- Ramakrishnan G, Lo Muzio L, Elinos-Báez CM, Jagan S, Augustine TA, Kamaraj S, et al. Silymarin inhibited proliferation and induced apoptosis in hepatic cancer cells. *Cell Prolif*. 2009 Apr;42(2):229–40.
- Khan AQ, Khan R, Tahir M, Rehman MU, Lateef A, Ali F, et al. Silibinin inhibits tumor promotional triggers and tumorigenesis against chemically induced two-stage skin carcinogenesis in Swiss albino mice: possible role of oxidative stress and inflammation. *Nutr Cancer*. 2014;66(2):249–58.
- Kauntz H, Bousserouel S, Gosse F, Marescaux J, Raul F. Silibinin, a natural flavonoid, modulates the early expression of chemoprevention biomarkers in a preclinical model of colon carcinogenesis. *Int J Oncol*. 2012 Sep;41(3):849–54.
- Yang X, Li X, An L, Bai B, Chen J. Silibinin induced the apoptosis of Hep-2 cells via oxidative stress and down-regulating survivin expression. *Eur Arch Oto-Rhino-Laryngol Off J Eur Fed Oto-Rhino-Laryngol Soc EUFOS Affil Ger Soc Oto-Rhino-Laryngol - Head Neck Surg*. 2013 Aug;270(8):2289–97.
- Kauntz H, Bousserouel S, Gossé F, Raul F. Silibinin triggers apoptotic signaling pathways and autophagic survival response in human colon adenocarcinoma cells and their derived metastatic cells. *Apoptosis Int J Program Cell Death*. 2011 Oct;16(10):1042–53.
- Kauntz H, Bousserouel S, Gossé F, Raul F. The flavonolignan silibinin potentiates TRAIL-induced apoptosis in human colon adenocarcinoma and in derived TRAIL-resistant metastatic cells. *Apoptosis Int J Program Cell Death*. 2012 Aug;17(8):797–809.
- Fan L, Ma Y, Liu Y, Zheng D, Huang G. Silymarin induces cell cycle arrest and apoptosis in ovarian cancer cells. *Eur J Pharmacol*. 2014 Nov 15;743:79–88.
- Ranapour S, Motamed N. Effect of Silibinin on the Expression of Mir-20b, Bcl2L11, and Erbb2 in Breast Cancer Cell Lines. *Mol Biotechnol*. 2023 Dec;65(12):1979–90.
- Lu W, Lin C, King TD, Chen H, Reynolds RC, Li Y. Silibinin inhibits Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin signaling by suppressing Wnt co-receptor LRP6 expression in human prostate and breast cancer cells. *Cell Signal*. 2012 Dec;24(12):2291–6.
- Kacar S, Bektur Aykanat NE, Sahinturk V. Silymarin inhibited DU145 cells by activating SLIT2 protein and suppressing expression of CXCR4. *Med Oncol Northwood Lond Engl*. 2020 Feb 15;37(3):18.
- Vaid M, Singh T, Prasad R, Katiyar SK. Silymarin inhibits melanoma cell growth both in vitro and in vivo by targeting cell cycle regulators, angiogenic biomarkers and induction of apoptosis. *Mol Carcinog*. 2015 Nov;54(11):1328–39.
- Zhang S, Yang Y, Liang Z, Duan W, Yang J, Yan J, et al. Silybin-mediated inhibition of Notch signaling exerts antitumor activity in human hepatocellular carcinoma cells. *PLoS One*. 2013;8(12):e83699.
- Eo HJ, Park GH, Song HM, Lee JW, Kim MK, Lee MH, et al. Silymarin induces cyclin D1 proteasomal degradation via its phosphorylation of threonine-286 in human colorectal cancer cells. *Int Immunopharmacol*. 2015 Feb;24(1):1–6.
- Cui H, Li TL, Guo HF, Wang JL, Xue P, Zhang Y, et al. Silymarin-mediated regulation of the cell cycle and DNA damage response exerts antitumor activity in human hepatocellular carcinoma. *Oncol Lett*. 2018 Jan;15(1):885–92.
- Wadhwa K, Pahwa R, Kumar M, Kumar S, Sharma PC, Singh G, et al. Mechanistic Insights into the Pharmacological Significance of Silymarin. *Molecules*. 2022 Aug 21;27(16):5327.
- Kim SH, Oh DS, Oh JY, Son TG, Yuk DY, Jung YS. Silymarin Prevents Restraint Stress-Induced Acute Liver Injury by Ameliorating Oxidative Stress and Reducing Inflammatory Response. *Mol Basel Switz*. 2016 Apr 1;21(4):443.
- Shaarawy SM, Tohamy AA, Elgendy SM, Elmageed ZYA, Bahnasy A, Mohamed MS, et al. Protective effects of garlic and silymarin on NDEA-induced rats hepatotoxicity. *Int J Biol Sci*. 2009 Aug 11;5(6):549–57.
- Ou Q, Weng Y, Wang S, Zhao Y, Zhang F, Zhou J, et al. Silybin Alleviates Hepatic Steatosis and Fibrosis in NASH Mice by Inhibiting Oxidative Stress and Involvement with the Nf- $\kappa$ B Pathway. *Dig Dis Sci*. 2018 Dec;63(12):3398–408.
- Aghazadeh S, Amini R, Yazdanparast R, Ghaffari SH. Anti-apoptotic and anti-inflammatory effects of Silybum marianum in treatment of experimental steatohepatitis. *Exp Toxicol Pathol*. 2011 Sep;63(6):569–74.
- Chen IS, Chen YC, Chou CH, Chuang RF, Sheen LY, Chiu CH. Hepatoprotection of silymarin against thiocetamide-induced chronic liver fibrosis. *J Sci Food Agric*. 2012 May;92(7):1441–7.
- Dehmlow C, Erhard J, De Groot H. Inhibition of Kupffer cell functions as an explanation for the hepatoprotective properties of silibinin. *Hepatology*. 1996 Apr;23(4):749–54.
- Jia JD, Bauer M, Cho JJ, Ruehl M, Milani S, Boigk G, et al. Antifibrotic effect of silymarin in rat secondary biliary fibrosis is mediated by downregulation of procollagen alpha1(I) and TIMP-1. *J Hepatol*. 2001 Sep;35(3):392–8.
- Sengul E, Gelen V, Yildirim S, Senturk E, Dag Y, Eser G, et al. Investigation of Effects of Silymarin in 5-Fluorouracil Hepatotoxicity and Nephrotoxicity in Mice [Internet]. In Review; 2021 May [cited 2023 Nov 18]. Available from: <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-448267/v1>
- Ladas EJ, Kroll DJ, Oberlies NH, Cheng B, Ndao DH, Rheingold SR, et al. A randomized, controlled, double-blind, pilot study of milk thistle for the treatment of hepatotoxicity in childhood acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). *Cancer*. 2010 Jan 15;116(2):506–13.

