



Ginger Root

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Dear Health Enthusiast:

Ginger is an herb that Ayurveda medicine calls "The Universal Medicine", and one that has perhaps the oldest tradition in the West of any botanical. Ginger (*Zingiber Officinale*) has a long history in both China and India for its medicinal properties, in both the fresh and dried root forms.



Ginger root is well known as a remedy for travel sickness, nausea and indigestion and is used for wind, colic, irritable bowel, loss of appetite, chills, cold, flu, poor circulation, menstrual cramps, indigestion and gastrointestinal problems such as gas and stomach cramps. Ginger root as a medicinal herb is used primarily for the treatment of dyspepsia (discomfort after eating). This includes the symptoms of bloating, heartburn, flatulence, and nausea. It is also considered helpful as a preventative for motion sickness and as a digestive. Due to its antispasmodic characteristic some people have used it to help ease menstrual cramps. In some traditional systems it is credited with the ability to treat arthritis, fevers, headaches, and toothaches.

Ginger stimulates digestion and improves the tone of the intestinal tract, which can ease the process of digestion itself and lead to less overall irritation. Additionally, ginger may be a protective agent for the stomach against the damage caused by both non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and alcohol. These findings indicate ginger can have a role in the prevention of gastric ulcers as well.

The key active ingredients in ginger are volatile oils, specifically gingerols and shogaols that are responsible for the pungent, spicy taste. Ginger root relieves nausea and cramping by neutralizing stomach acids and stimulating the production of digestive juices. Ginger root has an anti-inflammatory effect, which may help account for its effectiveness in relieving digestive irritation.

When ginger is taken as a standardized extract, ginger root reduces the body's production of prostaglandins. This may help to reduce the severity of chronic pain and the pain associated with rheumatoid arthritis and muscle aches.

The musculoskeletal system uses for ginger are strongly focused on its anti-inflammatory properties. Ginger is known to inhibit the production of cytokines, which are chemicals that

modulate the immune response and promote inflammation. Therefore, ginger is used to treat disorders such as arthritis, bursitis, and other pain syndromes where inflammation is a culprit.

The anti-emetic activity of ginger is believed to be due to the pungent compound shogaol. It is effective for nausea and vomiting in pregnancy, and for motion sickness. It decreases nausea associated with radiation and chemotherapy too. It is well known as a remedy for travel sickness, nausea and indigestion. Ginger may also be taken orally as an herbal remedy to prevent or relieve nausea resulting from chemotherapy, motion sickness, pregnancy, and surgery. Results of laboratory studies as well as from small studies conducted among seasick sailors or ship passengers found that ginger generally has more effectiveness for relieving motion sickness than placebo.

Anti-inflammatory and antibacterial

Ginger root contains large amounts of a volatile oil, zingiberene, which gives the spice its anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties. Ginger has been known to ease inflammation of the joints and muscle tissue. It is used in this role of digesting infectious agents and has been effective in treating sinusitis, bronchitis and allergic rhinitis for thousands of years.

Anti-viral

Ginger is anti-viral and makes a warming cold and flu remedy. In addition, ginger root is a natural decongestant and antihistamine, and is often included in herbal cold and cough preparations.

Digestive

The pungent compound gingerol has been shown to stimulate gastric secretions and peristalsis.

Circulatory

Due to its tremendous circulation-increasing qualities, ginger is thought to improve the complexion. As an anticoagulant, it inhibits platelet aggregation. Studies demonstrate that ginger can lower cholesterol levels by reducing cholesterol absorption in the blood and liver. It may also aid in preventing internal blood clots. A warming remedy, ginger has enhances circulation, thereby improving its efficacy for treating pain disorders. It can lower cholesterol and blood pressure and aid in preventing internal blood clots.

For chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia:

Dr. Jacob Teitelbaum is the author of "From Fatigued to Fantastic," one of the premier texts on treating CFIDS (chronic fatigue and immune dysfunction syndrome) and Fibromyalgia. A few of the points he makes regarding the use of ginger for CFIDS and FMS are as follows:

- Relief of muscle and/or joint pain. Many components of Ginger are, like aspirin and Motrin, potent inhibitors of inflammatory substances (e.g., Prostaglandins). Ginger is also thought to inhibit "Substance P," a pain mediator found to be elevated in FMS. This is the same substance that Capsaicin (hot pepper) creams work through. For Substance P inhibition, dried Ginger seems to be most effective. In a study of 10 patients with muscle pains and 46 patients with arthritis (Rheumatoid and regular "wear and tear" osteoarthritis), 100% of muscle pain and 75% of arthritis patients noted relief.

- Nausea and vomiting is decreased. Ginger also decreases bowel spasm while improving gastric motility (moving food out of the stomach to the bowels). These are often major problems in CFIDS/ FMS, resulting in bloating after eating. Ginger can also inhibit diarrhea. Fresh ginger inhibited stomach ulcers caused by aspirin and Motrin (in several animal studies).
- Warming the body (increasing thermogenesis). The fresh Ginger works much better for this.
- Ginger reportedly helps migraine headaches.
- Dysequilibrium (e.g., motion sickness). Although likely not as effective for middle ear (vestibular Ñ where you feel like you are spinning in a circle) dizziness, it inhibits the nausea associated with dizziness. For motion sickness, it works best when taken 4 hours before travel.
- Raising blood pressure (dry Ginger only). This can be helpful in CFIDS/FMS.
- In addition to these benefits, ginger can decrease the risk of heart disease by "platelet inhibition" (like aspirin and vitamin E do) and by lowering cholesterol. It is a strong antioxidant and can inhibit certain bowel infections (Salmonella and Vibrio) and, in 5% and 25% aqueous extracts, can be effective against vaginal Trichomonas infections.

The American Cancer Society also reports that preliminary results from animal studies show that ginger root has some effect on preventing or slowing the growth of tumors. They state that the results warrant further investigation to learn if the same results will be achieved in humans.

Side effects of Ginger are minimal. Some people experience heartburn, belching, stomach pain, and diarrhea or mouth irritation if they take large doses of ginger. You can reduce those gastrointestinal effects by taking ginger in capsules, according to the University of Maryland Medical Center. It is possible, however, that ginger might amplify the effects of blood-thinning drugs. For that reason, talk with your health-care provider before taking ginger if you regularly take warfarin, heparin, aspirin or another blood thinner. In addition, because of the possible effect on the blood, the University of Texas at El Paso's Herbal Safety website recommends that you stop taking ginger at least a week before any scheduled surgery.



Be sure to try NSP's Ginger (100 caps), Stomach Comfort (60 chewable tabs), Para Cleanse (10 Day), or Stress Relief, Chinese (100 caps).

References:

- <http://ezinearticles.com/?Ginger---The-Universal-Medicine-Of-Ayurveda&id=3172688>
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- <http://www.livestrong.com/article/135766-ginger-roots-side-effects/>
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Yours in Good Health!

Sincerely,

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