PRECAUTIONS

Ginger thins the blood if taken in high doses and may cause bleeding and bruising. Don't use it if you are taking blood thinning medication such as aspirin or enoxaparin, or if you have blood clotting problems. Stop taking ginger if you experience threatened miscarriage or vaginal bleeding in later pregnancy.

If you're due to have a planned Caesarean, stop taking ginger (and many other herbal remedies) at least two weeks before surgery to reduce the risk of bleeding.

Avoid ginger if you're on any prescribed medicines, especially blood thinning drugs, aspirin, high blood pressure tablets, or even other herbal remedies that have the same effect.

If you have any pregnancy complications (eg gestational diabetes, high blood pressure or pre-eclampsia), especially if you are taking prescribed medication, you should avoid large amounts of ginger.

If you have any medical problems, particularly epilepsy, gallstones, irritable bowel syndrome or anaemia, ginger can worsen your condition and interfere with drugs you may need.

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The leading authority on maternity complementary medicine

www.expectancy.co.uk
info@expectancy.co.uk

This leaflet was prepared by Dr Denise Tiran, a worldwide leading authority on maternity complementary therapies, and is intended as a guide only. Please contact your midwife or doctor if you have any worries or specific questions

SHOULD I TAKE GINGER FOR PREGNANCY SICKNESS?

Information for expectant parents

expectancy®

Written for Expectancy by Dr Denise Tiran
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SHOULD I TAKE GINGER FOR PREGNANCY SICKNESS?

Information for expectant parents

WHAT IS PREGNANCY SICKNESS?

Sickness – feeling nauseous or actually vomiting – affects up to 90% of pregnant women and is considered "normal" although it can have profound effects on your daily life. It can occur at any time, day or night, be constant and last much longer than the first three months.

Hormones are the main culprit but it's often worse if you're tired, hungry, stressed, prone to travel sickness, expecting twins or have neck or back problems. It may be accompanied by heartburn, food cravings or aversions, excess saliva, constipation or headaches.

A few women (1–2%) develop severe vomiting *(hyperemesis gravidarum)*, with dehydration and excessive weight loss, usually requiring hospital admission.

EVERYONE TELLS ME TO EAT GINGER BISCUITS

Research has shown that ginger can ease nausea and reduce vomiting in many people, including pregnant women, cancer patients and even astronauts with motion sickness.

However, ginger biscuits are not the answer! There's not enough ginger to be effective – and the sugar can cause blood sugar changes which actually make you feel worse.

Ginger, even when taken in a medicinal dose, is not appropriate for everyone with pregnancy sickness. Sometimes it makes the nausea worse or triggers heartburn and wind.

Ginger is traditionally used in Chinese medicine to warm up the body's internal energies, but if you're hot or irritable (hot-tempered) it increases your symptoms.

You can try ginger for sickness if you're craving hot drinks, feel generally cold, have constant nausea and find that vomiting immediately after eating makes you feel temporarily better.

If you think ginger is appropriate for your symptoms, make a tea from a teaspoonful *(about 1 gm)* of grated fresh root ginger and boiled water and sip it whenever you feel sick.

If it's not right for you, try peppermint tea instead, which has a cooling effect. However, avoid peppermint if you have any heart problems as it can cause palpitations in large amounts.

CAUTION – GINGER IS NOT SAFE FOR EVERYONE

Ginger works in exactly the same way as drugs: the chemicals are broken down to be used in the body, and waste products are excreted. As with drugs, it's possible to over-dose on ginger, causing unpleasant and sometimes harmful side-effects.

Unfortunately, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence *(NICE)* advocates ginger for everyone in pregnancy with sickness, but they've only looked at evidence that it works and haven't considered the research on possible risks of ginger.

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