

The Benefits of Ginger

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Ginger is one of the oldest spices, originating in tropical Southeast Asia. It has been cultivated for more than 3,000 years. The cuisines of Asia are perfumed with its essence, as are the sweetbreads of northern Europe. An ancient food with medicinal properties, ginger contains gingerol, shogaol and zingiberene, which have antioxidant properties.

It is a good source of dietary fiber, vitamin E, vitamin B6, iron, magnesium, potassium and selenium, and a very good source of manganese. Ginger root is very low in cholesterol and sodium.

Health Benefits of Ginger

Ginger has been revered for thousands of years as a universal medicine, especially in areas such as China and India. It has been said to help provide relief for conditions as diverse as asthma, painful menstruation, migraines, indigestion and infection and is said to promote vitality and longevity.

Ginger root is full of natural anti-inflammatories, and anything that helps keep levels of inflammation low is good for your heart, says Dr. Andrew Weil, author of *Eating Well for Optimum Health*.

Ginger is also good for headaches. Chew a piece for half an hour to alleviate the pain, advises herbalist Rosita Arvigo.

Now new research by scientists in America suggests that symptoms of knee osteoarthritis can be significantly reduced with concentrated extracts of ginger. By comparing ginger with a placebo in a randomized control, they found that knee pain on standing and after walking were all reduced by ginger and that the amount of painkillers needed was also reduced.

Ginger is also good for the stomach. Japanese researchers found that the gingerols in ginger block the vomit reflex. *Ginger will help settle your stomach and calm nausea after drinking, or anytime you have an upset stomach?*, says dietician Leslie Bonci of Pittsburgh University.

However, high doses (6 grams or more) may damage the stomach lining and could eventually lead to ulcers. Allergic skin reactions are also possible, but in recommended doses, ginger causes no side effects. Massive doses of ginger can depress the nervous system and cause heart irregularities. If you suspect an overdose, seek medical attention immediately.