Ginger

This sheet is about using ginger in a pregnancy and while breastfeeding. This information should not take the place of medical care and advice from your healthcare provider.

What is ginger?

Ginger (Zingibar officinale) is a plant that is widely used in foods and beverages. The root (rhizome) is the part of the plant that is eaten or taken. Ginger is also used as an herbal remedy to treat different conditions, such as morning sickness, motion sickness, upset stomach, or vomiting. As an herbal supplement, ginger is available in the form of pills, capsules, syrups, or it can be included in lozenges. Ginger as part of the diet is not known to cause any problems related to pregnancy or breastfeeding.

Herbal supplements, including those that have ginger in them, are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the same way as prescribed medications. The purity and amount of ginger in supplements may be different than what is on the label. Please see the fact sheet on Herbal Products for more information at https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/herbal-products-pregnancy/.

I take ginger. Can it make it harder for me to get pregnant?

It is not known if ginger can make it harder to get pregnant.

Does taking ginger increase the chance for a miscarriage?

Miscarriage can occur in any pregnancy. Ginger has not been found to increase the chance of miscarriage in humans.

Does taking ginger in the first trimester increase the chance of birth defects?

Every pregnancy starts out with a 3-5% chance of having a birth defect. This is called the background risk. Several studies looking at the use of an average of 1000 mg of ginger per day during pregnancy did not find an increased chance of birth defects above the background risk.

Does taking ginger in pregnancy increase the chance of other pregnancy-related problems?

There are very few studies looking at the use of ginger in the second trimester and no studies when it is used in the third trimester. Use in the second trimester was not found to increase the chance for preterm delivery (delivery before 37 weeks of pregnancy) in one study. Ginger has not been found to increase the chance of stillbirth in human studies.

Ginger can interact with some medications and may affect the way certain medications work, such as medications that treat blood pressure or affect how your blood clots. At high doses, ginger can lower blood sugar. Taking ginger with certain medications may be a concern at any time in pregnancy. If you take a medication and would like to take ginger, it is important to talk it over with your healthcare provider.

Does taking ginger in pregnancy affect future behavior or learning for the child?

Ginger is not expected to increase the chance for behavior or learning issues in the child.

Breastfeeding while eating ginger or take a ginger supplement:

There is no known reason to avoid cooking with and eating ginger in its natural form during breastfeeding. When taken as a supplement, there are not enough studies to know if it can increase risks to a breastfeeding child. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all of your breastfeeding questions.

If a male takes ginger, could it affect fertility (ability to get partner pregnant) or increase the chance of birth defects?

Studies have not been done to see if ginger could affect male fertility or increase the chance of birth defects. In general, exposures that fathers or sperm donors have are unlikely to increase the risks to a pregnancy. For more information, please see the MotherToBaby fact sheet Paternal Exposures at https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/paternal-exposures-pregnancy/.