Ginger

This sheet is about exposure to ginger in pregnancy and while breastfeeding. This information is based on published research studies. It 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. Eating ginger in moderation as part of a balanced diet is not known to cause any problems related to pregnancy or breastfeeding.

Ginger is also used as an herbal remedy to treat different conditions, such as morning sickness, motion sickness, upset stomach, or vomiting. It is available as a supplement sold over the counter, and can come in the form of pills, capsules, syrups, or included in lozenges or tea.

Talk with your healthcare provider before taking any supplements. It is generally not suggested to use herbal products/supplements during pregnancy or breastfeeding unless directed by your healthcare provider to treat a condition. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates dietary supplements in a different way than prescription or over-the-counter drugs. For more details on supplements, please see the fact sheet 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 taking ginger can make it harder to get pregnant.

Does taking ginger increase the chance of miscarriage?

Miscarriage is common and can occur in any pregnancy for many different reasons. Ginger has not been found to increase the chance of miscarriage in humans.

Does taking ginger increase the chance of birth defects?

Birth defects can happen in any pregnancy for different reasons. Out of all babies born each year, about 3 out of 100 (3%) will have a birth defect. We look at research studies to try to understand if an exposure, like ginger, might increase the chance of birth defects in a pregnancy. 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.

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

Information from one study on the use of ginger in the second trimester of pregnancy has not found an increased chance of preterm delivery (birth before week 37). Other studies have not seen an increase in preterm delivery, low birth weight (weighing less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces [2500 grams] at birth), or stillbirth.

Ginger can interact with some medications and might 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 supplements with certain medications might be a concern at any time in pregnancy. If you take a medication and would like to take a ginger supplement, 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 of behavior or learning issues for the child.

Breastfeeding while eating ginger or taking a ginger supplement:

When used in moderation as part of a balanced diet, there is no known reason to avoid cooking with and eating ginger in its natural form during breastfeeding. There is not enough information on the use of ginger as a supplement in breastfeeding to know if it can increase risks to a breastfeeding child. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about all your breastfeeding questions.

If a man takes ginger, could it affect fertility or increase the chance of birth defects?

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

Please click here to view references.

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