

~ Ask Granny Earth ~

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Ginger Root

ASK GRANNY EARTH

I just love fresh ginger tea. I buy the root at the grocery store and make it for my family. Does it have any medicinal qualities? Is it possible to give them too much ginger tea?

I too love ginger tea and also ginger 'candy', which is dried ginger coated with sugar. Ginger does have medicinal properties. It's been well researched and its therapeutic benefits are largely due to its volatile oil and oleoresin content. I don't believe one can get too much of it and I've never heard of anyone having ill effects from the tea.

Native to Asia, Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) is grown throughout the tropics, where it gets fertile soil and plenty of rain. It is a perennial plant, growing up to 2 feet tall. The rhizome (root) is unearthed when the plant is 10 months old. Ginger is not only a widely used spice, but is also one of the world's best medicines. The root contains high levels of zingiberene, a volatile oil that is warming and stimulating. It's been revered both in Asia and Europe since ancient times and is thought to have derived from the Garden of Eden.

Ginger is a circulatory stimulant, anti-inflammatory and antiseptic. It brings relief to the digestive tract- is good for motion sickness and morning sickness. It also is strongly antiseptic which means that it acts against infections. In a

trial in China, 70% of patients with bacillary dysentery who were given ginger made a speedy and full recovery.

If you're looking for a good tasting remedy for digestive complaints, such as indigestion, nausea, gas and colic, ginger is your answer. It relieves both nausea and is beneficial for gastrointestinal infections, including some types of food poisoning. An added benefit is its circulatory stimulation properties. Ginger helps blood to flow to the surface, making it an important remedy for poor circulation to the hands and feet. By improving the circulation, Ginger automatically helps to stabilize high blood pressure. In cases of the flu or colds, it increases sweating and helps reduce body temperature in fevers. You might want to try Ginger tea before taking aspirin, or other OTC drugs. Most people, including children, will love the taste of ginger tea with a little honey for flavor.

Since Ginger is a warming herb it will not only soothe colds and flu, but will also ease coughs and make the patient feel warm and comfortable.

For a soothing Ginger tea; bring to a boil 2 cups of water and reduce heat. Mean-while grate 1 teaspoon fresh Ginger root- add to the water. Simmer for 10 – 15 minutes (covered) and strain. Pour into cup, add 1-teaspoon of honey - stir and serve to the patient. Try to get them to drink as much as they can and then go to sleep. This is one of the most soothing teas that I know of.

The Chinese tell us that fresh and dried Ginger are two different and distinct remedies: Fresh ginger is given for fever, headaches, nausea and aching muscles. Dried ginger is used for 'internal cold' with symptoms such as cold hands, a weak pulse and a pale complexion. Both fresh & dried herb are used for circulation problems and blood pressure.

We are so lucky to be able to purchase fresh ginger root at our local grocery stores. The price per pound may seem steep, but a little goes a long way if you grate it with a food grater for tea. I do not put my Ginger root in the refrigerator. I just leave it on the counter. If I don't use it for a while, it will begin to send out a delightful little 'sprout'. I've planted that sprout, but have never had any luck with it growing. If you have ever grown it, I'd appreciate you sharing with me how you did it. Growing our own medicinal herbs is such a satisfying reward.