

8 Incredible Health Benefits of Ginger

By [Lauren Venosta](#)



Ginger is a flowering plant and its official name is *Zingiber officinale*. The rhizome, more commonly known as the root, is what you are likely familiar with. The root is spicy and peppery in flavor, with loads of medicinal properties. It's used all over the world in culinary and clinical applications—both for good reason.

Ginger has been called a [superfood](#) time and again, but what makes it so powerful? This root has the following eight superpowers.

1. Stimulates Digestion

You know that feeling after you eat a meal when it seems like a brick is in your stomach? You wonder if your body is actually digesting your food or if it's just going to sit in there forever? Or what about feelings of

indigestion with uncomfortable burping and acid reflux? Heartburn is real and painful!

Ginger is your new best friend for supporting everything regarding [digestive health](#). [Functional dyspepsia](#) is the clinical term used to describe upper abdominal discomfort like acid reflux that is thought to be related to slowing of the digestive system. [Ginger has been shown](#) to help these issues.

Ginger helps increase the body's ability to empty food from the stomach more quickly—known as *gastric emptying*. With this increased motility in the digestive system, it's less likely that heartburn or indigestion will occur. In fact, [one study of healthy participants showed](#) that taking ginger capsules (1200 mg) with a meal stimulates digestion so much that gastric emptying speed was doubled! Imagine the relief that would come from food leaving your stomach twice as quickly.

The more efficient your digestion is, the more energy you will have because [researchers have found that](#) approximately 60 percent of your body's energy goes to metabolism. If ginger can improve digestion, your metabolism will improve and energy will be more available. This is possible because the quicker you can digest your food, the faster you will absorb the vitamins and minerals from the foods you eat. You will also have less undigested food in your digestive tract; food consumes energy when left undigested. So not only does ginger stimulate digestion by improving symptoms of dyspepsia and speeding gastric emptying, but it also benefits your overall energy levels.

2. Lowers Blood Pressure

High blood pressure (known as hypertension) is a common symptom of the standard American diet, which is high in processed foods. [According to the Mayo Clinic](#), when hypertension is left untreated it can lead to damage to your arteries, heart, brain, kidneys, and eyes. Doctors frequently prescribe blood pressure medications to their patients, but what if you could reduce your blood pressure naturally?

Ginger has been shown to improve blood pressure (in conjunction with medication) by acting as a vasodilator—it expands your blood vessels. This is helpful for increasing circulation in the body, which reduces the overall blood pressure throughout the body. Ginger also contains potassium, a mineral that research has found can help lower blood pressure. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), ginger contains 415 mg of potassium per 100 g. That's more than a banana (a food known for being high in potassium), which only contains 358 mg per 100 g.

3. Reduces Nausea

Nausea is no fun. Whether it's from motion sickness, morning sickness, post-surgery effects, chemotherapy, or pregnancy, nausea is not an experience anyone wants. And when you do experience an upset stomach, you'd give anything to make it end! Enter ginger. Ginger has been shown to be an effective remedy for nausea related to pregnancy and chemotherapy.

Ginger has also been found to reduce the amount of nausea you might otherwise experience when feeling seasick. After surgeries, it's common for some people to experience nausea and vomiting. The good news is that researchers have found ginger to be an “effective means for reducing postoperative nausea and vomiting.” Not only does ginger provide relief from post-surgery nausea, it can also help cancer patients. In a study of both adults and children undergoing chemotherapy treatments, ginger was found to be effective in providing relief from the nausea that accompanies those treatments. Based on the scientific evidence, ginger is definitely worth a try when you're experiencing nausea of any kind.

4. Reduces Inflammation

Inflammation occurs naturally even in healthy individuals. It's a natural and healthy response to protect the body from injuries or sickness. However, when inflammation is excessive or chronic, it can be very damaging. In fact, researchers have found that chronic inflammation is at

the root of many common diseases such as heart disease, autoimmune disorders, and cancer.

The active constituents in raw ginger—gingerol, shogaol, and paradol—are responsible for many of the natural anti-inflammatory effects that ginger provides. [Ginger has been shown](#) to inhibit the production of pro-inflammatory [cytokines](#) (small proteins released by cells to communicate with other cells in the body). Pro-inflammatory cytokines are responsible for the *upregulation* of inflammatory reactions, meaning that these reactions happen more often in the body. This is directly related to increased inflammation in the body. Since ginger [has been shown](#) to reduce the levels of inflammation that those pro-inflammatory cytokines can produce, it's only natural that inflammation will decrease, too. This is a big deal! Because inflammation can run so rampant in the body—especially with a poor diet—ginger is a great way to help reduce the overall amount of inflammation in the body. If you're experiencing an inflammatory condition, ginger is a natural and powerful anti-inflammatory remedy to try.

5. Antibacterial Properties

If you aren't convinced of the medicinal properties of ginger yet, you will be now! [Researchers have found](#) that ginger is an effective antibacterial for many drug-resistant bacteria in clinical applications. In their study, the researchers stated that “ginger has great potential in the treatment of many microbial diseases [such as *Bacillus* and *E. coli*].”

The antibacterial benefits don't stop there. In oral health, two types of [ginger have been shown](#) to inhibit the growth of pathogens that contribute to [periodontitis](#) (inflammation of the gums that is caused by gum bacteria). The antibacterial properties that ginger possesses show that food truly is medicine.

6. Blood-Sugar Regulator

[Diabetes](#) is the most common disease of the endocrine system. Type 2 diabetes accounts for [more than 90 percent](#) of diabetes diagnoses. One

of the causes of diabetes is chronic *hyperglycemia*—the clinical term for high blood sugar. If you can regulate your blood sugar levels, you will be less likely to experience chronic hyperglycemia that can lead to diabetes over time. [One study showed](#) that supplementing with ginger reduced fasting blood sugar levels as well as [hemoglobin A1c levels](#).

If you can keep your A1c levels below 5.7 percent, then you are in the normal range. Since ginger reduces blood sugar levels and A1c, it's safe to say that ginger helps regulate the mind-body system to keep blood sugar levels in check and prevent chronic hyperglycemia.

7. Reduces Menstrual Pains

Many women know how debilitating menstrual pain can be. There are over-the-counter pain medications dedicated to this specific pain, but ginger may also provide relief.

One study found that ginger is as effective as ibuprofen in reducing the pain associated with [dysmenorrhea](#) (painful menstruation) in women. Menstrual cramps in the abdomen and lower back are common in dysmenorrhea. That's great news for women! Next time you experience cramping during your menstrual cycle, give ginger a try.

8. Positively Affects Cholesterol Levels

As stated earlier, ginger is helpful in reducing blood pressure, but it's also beneficial for cholesterol levels. [Ginger has been found](#) to reduce cholesterol levels—specifically reducing low-density lipoproteins (LDL). [According to the American Heart Association](#), “LDL cholesterol is called ‘bad’ cholesterol. Think of it as less desirable or even lousy cholesterol, because it contributes to fatty buildups in arteries.” That fatty buildup is known as [atherosclerosis](#) and it, it increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

How to Use Ginger

Knowing all these health benefits of ginger is great, but how can you easily incorporate ginger in your daily routine? Ginger is pretty spicy, so you may not enjoy its taste. Luckily, there are many options for those who love ginger and those who may be new to the root.

- **Fresh ginger root:** This is the most potent form of ginger, but also the most versatile. You can slice it and steep it in hot water for tea, mince it into stir-fry dishes, juice it, add it to your smoothies, or even take a slice and suck on it! Dried ginger or ginger juice is great for a mid day snack.
- **Ground ginger:** Ground ginger can be used in similar ways to fresh ginger. It can be steeped in hot water for tea or added to your favorite recipes. Powdered ginger is also great to use for baking.
- **Ginger capsules:** This is the easiest way to get ginger into your diet—especially if you aren't a fan of the taste! Ginger capsules, or ginger supplements, are simple. The ground ginger powder is added to a capsule for easy consumption at any time of day.
- **Ginger tea:** As mentioned, you can make ginger tea using fresh ginger or ground ginger. But you can also buy ready-to-go ginger extract tea bags at the store. These are great to have on hand if feel nauseated or want to settle your stomach after eating.
- **Ginger chews:** Ginger chews are like ginger candies and tend to be more mild in flavor and can be taken anywhere. Make sure to check the ingredients to make sure you're not consuming unwanted ingredients like corn syrup.
- **Ginger oil:** Ginger oil can be taken internally or rubbed topically to treat pain. Ginger essential oil has many soothing properties and is useful to use for massages.