vomiting attacks in 70% of subjects (Eur J Obstet Gynaecol Reprod Biol 1991;38:19-24). Ginger should be taken as 1 gram of powdered ginger, 4 times a day, in divided doses. Use for short periods of time, and do not exceed 1g daily. There have been no reported side effects.

Ginger: Safe or Not Safe? A while ago, there were claims that ginger can cause birth defects and abortions. Actually, the controversy results when an isolated compound of ginger is used, rather than ginger as a whole food. Two studies found that the isolated compound may cause birth defects but ignored the fact that other parts of ginger contain equally powerful antimutagenic properties. In other words, using the whole herb is not a problem. A review found no reports in the scientific literature of miscarriage or birth defects from ginger (Bergner 1991). Another review of all the studies on ginger could find no evidence that ginger harmed the mother or the child (Fulder, Tenne 1996).

Several other studies confirm these results (Fischer-Rassmussen 1991; Vytaynovich 2001; Keating, Chez 2002; Willetts 2003; Smith 2004; Chittumma 2007). The FDA considers 5g of ginger to be safe as a whole food. Two double-blind studies (Overton Gynecol 1995;173:881-884) have shown that ginger can bring relief, an Australian study reveals. This ancient Chinese plant helps ease nausea and vomiting symptoms among nearly 600 women tested. The women, all less than 14 weeks pregnant, received weekly 20 minute acupuncture sessions for 4 weeks. Symptoms were gone by the second week, the Adelaide University researchers report in the American Journal of Birth.

Between 1% and 2% of pregnant women experience hyperemesis gravidarium, or severe morning sickness. A randomized, placebo-controlled crossover study found that using acupuncture point PC6 helps ease nausea and vomiting. 33 women (average age 28.4 years) were divided into two groups. Group A received acupuncture at the PC6 point on both forearms 3 times per day for 30 minutes. Group B received a form of placebo acupuncture. On days 1 and 2 of the 8 day study, each group received their treatments; after two more days of no treatment, the participants were switched for each group. Each day, the women reported their degree of nausea and instances of vomiting. The women given active acupuncture experienced a “significantly faster reduction of nausea” compared with those who received a placebo. This reduction was seen in both groups; identical results were seen in each group when the treatment was switched. Vomiting was also reduced in both groups, with a much greater reduction seen in those receiving acupuncture. Daily vomiting had been reported by all 22 women at the study onset, by day 3 less than half of the women in the active group were still vomiting compared with 75% of those in the placebo group (Journal of Pain and Symptom Management 2000;20:273-279).

Further help for morning sickness

•Vitamin B6 may also help according to double-blind studies (Obstet Gynecol 1995;173:881-884)
•Eat small, frequent meals (every 2-3 hours while awake)
•Eat High complex carbohydrate foods. A brown rice and egg sandwich may help, as may a toast with peanut butter spread. Save beverages until after eating. Consume liquids and solids at separate times. Save vegetables until 1 hour after the meal or 1 hour before
•Before going out of bed in the morning, eat something. Keep whole grain crackers at bedside
•void saturated fat (especially fried)
•void caffeine
•Susan Weed says walking at least one mile a day can help alleviate morning sickness.
•And try very gently rubbing your stomach in a circular motion to relieve nausea.

The Natural Path is written by Ted Spiker and Linda Woolven, a registered acupuncturist and focused nutritionist with a practice in Toronto. For an appointment, call Ted at (416) 975.3021. Herbs are the author of The All-Natural Vegetarian Passport, The Vegetarian Passport Cookbook and Smart Women’s Guide to PMS and Pain-free Menstruation. She is the author of Healing Herbs, The Family Naturopathic Encyclopedia and Sex & Fertility: Natural Solutions. This newsletter is intended for educational purposes only and is in no way intended for self-diagnosis or self-treatment. For health problems, consult a qualified health practitioner.

Lifesaver: Valerian Helps Hot Flashes

Better known for insomnia, it turns out that valerian is valuable for menopause too. 68 women suffering from hot flashes were given either 250mg of valerian or 4 times a day for 8 weeks. Hot flashes in the valerian group decreased significantly more both in severity (8.82 to 5.23 versus 9.96 to 8.68) and in frequency (7.91 down to 4.83 versus 7.73 up to 7.75) (Iran J Pharm Res 2013;12:217-220).
Aching Back for Your Relief

When people suffering from lower back pain or osteoarthritis were given devil’s claw (standardized for 50mg harpagoside a day) and cayenne plaster all reduce low back pain better than a placebo (J Rheumatol 2007;34:1895-1901). Vitamin D levels have been shown to be low in people suffering from slipped disc and sciatica (J Altern Comp Med 1997;3:55-76). Don’t Smoke and one more surprising thing. Everyone knows that smoking is bad for you. But did you know it is bad for your back? Well it is. Smoking can contribute to low back pain (Spine 2010;35:1018-940). A survey of over 28,000 people found a significant association between smoking and low back pain (Spine 1998;23:2207-2213).

Mild Cognitive Impairment: Keep Your Memory Strong

The researchers concluded that “Our findings do not support the use of cognitive enhancers for Mild Cognitive Impairment” (CMAJ 2013;185:1933-1401). An Australian study undertook a double-blind trial of 291 people exposed to substantial amounts of air pollution who were given a broccoli sprout drink for 12 weeks. Urinary excretion of the pollutant benzene increased by 61% and of acetaldehyde by 41% (J Toxicol Environ Health A 2014;77:435-440). The study suggests that broccoli sprouts enhance the detoxification of some airborne pollutants.

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Fiber is Good for Your Heart

An analysis of 18 studies, including 672,408 people has found that people with the highest intake of fiber are 17% less likely to die from cardiovascular heart disease (Circulation 2013;128:2220-2229). If your back pain does not radiate to your legs, then 800mg of devil’s claw bark was as effective as Vioxx. Vioxx has conducted a review of controlled studies that found that White Willow bark is effective for lower back pain. The reviewers concluded that the review “provides evidence for the herb!” Magnesium has been shown to be low in people suffering from slipped disc and sciatica (J Altern Comp Med 1997;3:55-76). Don’t Smoke and one more surprising thing. Everyone knows that smoking is bad for you. But did you know it is bad for your back? Well it is. Smoking can contribute to low back pain (Spine 2010;35:1018-940). A survey of over 28,000 people found a significant association between smoking and low back pain (Spine 1998;23:2207-2213).

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