

Aches and Pains

There are various reasons for the aches and pains that we all feel from time to time: aching **joints** from influenza, period pains and cramps, headache and **backache**.

Pain is something very individual and it may vary not only in **severity** but also in how it is felt from person to person. If pain is continuous, i.e. it is “there” all the time then we tend to call it an ache. There are different types of pain that may be described as **throbbing**, burning, **stabbing** or **pinching** in character. Pain can hurt, cause **distress** or discomfort, and in the worst case, be **agonizing**. Lower back pain is the number one cause of pain in industrial countries, but there are other causes ...

Pharmacy customer: Hello.
PTA: Hallo. Was kann ich für Sie tun?

Sorry, I don't speak German.
No problem! How may I help you?

You see I took ibuprofen this morning because of this terrible lower back pain that I have. And it helped a little but now I have stomach cramps as well. Could you describe the pain?

Yes, the lower back pain is an uncomfortable constant ache. And the cramps are in the lower abdomen and quite unpleasant and, well crampy.

Is the pain possibly caused by menstrual problems?

Yes, I think so.
And the pain is definitely not from sport or from lifting something too heavy, is it? It's very easy to **strain** your back, you know.

No, I haven't been lifting anything heavy or doing any sport for the last few days. What can you recommend for the cramps?

We have this really good butylscopolamine product here. Butylscopolamine is an anti-spasmodic abdominal-specific preparation. You can take it in combination with paracetamol.

Paracetamol, is that acetaminophen in the US?

Yes, it is. They both actually come from a very long name that no-one could possibly remember! That's why we have these nice short names! What I also wanted to ask you is, are you certain that the aches and pains that you have are pre-menstrual and not something else?

Yes, of course. Why?

Well, extreme menstrual cramps may be a sign of a uterine disorder, such as **ovarian cysts**. I just thought I'd ask to be on the safe side!

No, problem. You can never be too sure. Is there anything else that you can recommend?

Certainly! What helps me is warmth. A hot-water bottle wrapped in a towel and placed on the **tummy** is very comforting. And ginger tea also helps some people with pre-menstrual and menstrual cramps.

Ginger tea! I didn't know that! Do you have a recipe?

What I do is take a walnut-sized piece of fresh ginger, peel it, grate it into a pot, add about a litre of freshly boiling water and let it **draw** for about ten to twelve minutes or so. Then add a teaspoon of honey and pour the **infusion** through a sieve into a pre-heated thermos flask and drink the tea over the course of the day.

That sounds really good. I'll try that! Don't you have ginger tea here?

Yes, and it is very good quality but the fresh ginger definitely has lots more taste. In fact, the two tastes are completely different.

Okay. So, that's paracetamol and the anti-tummy-cramps tablets. You've been a great help. I feel better already. Thank you for the ginger tea recipe! Bye!

Bye! ■

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VOCABULARY

Aches and pains	Schmerzen, Wehwehchen
joints	Gelenke
backache	Rückenschmerzen
severity	Heftigkeit, Schwere
throbbing	pochend, klopfend
stabbing	stechend
pinching	kneifend, zwickend
distress	Qual
agonizing	qualvoll
stomach	Magen
strain	verrenken
ovarian cysts	Eierstockzysten
tummy	Bauch, Bäuchlein
draw	ziehen
infusion	Aufguss