

Health-based guidance values

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21. There are currently no health-based guidance values (HBGV) with respect to ginger or its main components.

22. The NHS recommends, among other suggestions, trying foods or drinks containing ginger to ease symptoms of morning sickness and state that during pregnancy a person should check with a pharmacist before taking ginger supplements (NHS, 2024). NICE also recommended that ginger in fresh, tea, capsule, or syrup form could be used as a non-pharmacological intervention for mild to moderate nausea and vomiting in pregnancy (NICE, 2021). Anecdotally, 1-1.5 g per day of ginger has been recommended during pregnancy from online sources such as Healthline and Mother and Baby (Healthline, 2020; Mother and Baby, 2022). It is advised that supplements should be used in pregnancy only under the advice and supervision of a medical professional.

Red ginger

23. Red ginger is used in traditional medicine for treating headaches, indigestion, nausea, vomiting, and cancer. In addition, it is reported to be used to treat autoimmune diseases (psoriasis), hypertension, hypercholesteremia, hyperuricemia and bacterial infections. (Zhang et al., 2022)

24. The consumption of red ginger in the diet is not common due to the difference in taste when compared with common ginger. Available evidence suggests that red ginger is not commonly purchased or consumed in the UK.

25. Health claims from producers of red ginger supplements reference the benefits of its consumption for emesis and pain during and following pregnancy. Studies on this are primarily from hospital obstetrics settings in Asia (largely Indonesia), where red ginger is grown and readily available.

26. There are only limited toxicological data available on red ginger and studies looking at the medicinal potential of red ginger do not assess or comment on effects outside of those of interest. There are some examples of comparisons of red vs common ginger in the toxicological literature. In these studies, red ginger has an enhanced effect when compared to common ginger.

27. The Committee noted that only limited toxicological data on red ginger are available, and this is summarised in Annex C paragraph 27 and 28.