



## Yogurt: Good for your Gut!

Results of a recent study confirms that a new yogurt fights the bacteria that cause stomach ulcers with what researchers describe as almost vaccine-like effects. The new yogurt is part of a growing “functional food” market that generates \$60 billion in sales annually. The yogurt is currently for sale in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. The new study opens the door to possible arrival of the product in Canada and the US, say researchers.

Researchers have long known that yogurt, a milk product containing live bacteria, is a healthy source of calcium, protein, and other nutrients. Some brands of yogurt are now made with “probiotics” a type of bacteria — intended to improve health. “With this new yogurt, people can now enjoy the taste of yogurt while preventing or eliminating the bacteria that cause stomach ulcers,” says the study coordinator.

A type of bacteria called *Helicobacter pylori* (H. pylori for short) causes many stomach ulcers. This type of ulcer can be treated and eliminated with antibiotics and acid suppressants. However, treatment is unavailable to millions of people in developing countries who are infected with H. pylori. New research also links childhood H. pylori infection to malnutrition, growth impairment and other health problems. As a result, scientists have been seeking more economical ways of dealing with these bacteria.

In the new study, scientists found out that H. pylori seems to rely on a protein called urease to infect the stomach lining. Scientists then created a vaccine. They think that yogurt containing the antibody may help prevent the bacteria from adhering to the stomach lining. To test their theory, the scientists recruited 42



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people who tested positive for H. pylori. The volunteers consumed two cups daily of either plain yogurt or yogurt containing the antibody for four weeks.

“The results indicate that the suppression of H. pylori infection in humans could be achieved by drinking yogurt

fortified with (the) antibody.”

Although the yogurt appears less effective than antibiotics, it is a lot easier to take than medicine and can be eaten daily as part of a regular diet. Also, the antibody does not affect the yogurt’s taste and does not cause any side effects, note researchers. Still, anti-ulcer yogurt may not be for everyone -- people who are allergic to milk or eggs should probably avoid the product.

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