

Could beetroot be the key to a healthy burger?

Scientists are investigating if a burger can be made healthier by adding beetroot to its ingredients.



Nutritional experts at the University of Aberdeen have devised their own turkey burger, which includes extracts of the vegetable.

They believe that beetroot – which contains antioxidants – stops the body from absorbing the ‘bad’ fat found in burgers.

They are now seeking healthy males to eat their turkey and beetroot burger, as part of a study to test their findings.

Professor Garry Duthie from the University’s Rowett Research Institute of Nutrition and Health who is leading the research said: “Processed food forms a major and increasing part of our diet. Consumption of high fat convenience foods in Scotland increases year by year.

“We are looking to identify if adding a vegetable extract to processed food can actually protect the body from absorbing the ‘bad’ fats which exist in these types of products.

“When we eat a fatty food, a process called oxidation occurs in our stomachs, where fats are transformed into potentially toxic compounds and absorbed into the body. These compounds are linked to cancer and heart disease.

“We believe that adding a vegetable extract such as beetroot, which contains antioxidant compounds, will stop this oxidation of fat in the gut, and prohibit the body from absorbing the bad fat.”

Males between the ages of 21 and 60 are required for the study, which will take place over 4 separate days at the Rowett Institute in Bucksburn, Aberdeenshire.

Professor Duthie continued: “We trialled a number of different vegetable extracts and found that the combination of turkey and beetroot in the burger tastes good and has the advantage of looking the same as a normal burger.

“Beetroot may also have the added health benefit of lowering blood pressure.

“Volunteers will be asked to eat both turkey burgers with and without beetroot, and we will monitor to see which compounds their body absorbs when they eat the different burgers.

“If we can identify that using a vegetable extract such as beetroot in processed food stops bad fat from being ingested, this could not only have significant health benefits for the public but also benefits for the processed food industry.

“When fats oxidise in the stomach and become toxic they essentially go rancid. It is this same process which causes foods to go off in a shop or supermarket over time.

“So introducing an antioxidant such as beetroot would slow down this oxidation process, and have the added benefit for the food industry of lengthening the shelf life of products.”

Volunteers interested in taking part in the study should contact David Bremner on 01224 438785 or by email at d.bremner@abdn.ac.uk .

The study is part of a wider Scottish Government funded project being undertaken at the Rowett Institute investigating the potential health benefits of Scottish produce.

Notes to Editors

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Contact: [Kelly Potts](#)

The University of Aberdeen King's College Aberdeen AB24 3FX Tel: +44 (0)1224 272000



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