

# The alternative to yogurt

January 5 2014

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Credit: Asociacion RUVID

Researchers at the Universitat Politècnica de València have obtained new products fermented with probiotic bacteria from grains and nuts - what is known as plant-based or vegetable "milks" - which are an alternative to conventional yogurts. The products are specially designed for people with allergies to cow's milk, lactose or gluten intolerance, as well as children and pregnant women.

From the laboratories at the Institute of Food Engineering for

Development, the team has worked with almonds, oats and hazelnuts and soon will evaluate the use of walnuts and chestnuts as raw material for these new products. The Institute of Agrochemistry and Food Technology (IATA -CSIC) and the University College of Dublin (Ireland) have also taken part in the study.

The in vitro studies conducted show how some of the products developed have anti-inflammatory properties in intestine cells, which could alleviate allergic reactions caused by food, and increase the bioavailability of iron. The caseins of cow's milk as well as being on the list of allergens components hinder the absorption of iron.

"The results we have obtained also show that the 'milks' studied are a good matrix for the growth and viability of [probiotic bacteria](#) for the lifetime of the product, especially after their intake," says Chelo González, a researcher at the Universitat Politècnica de València.

Furthermore, the research conducted offers new clues to improve commercial plant-based "milks" available in the market today, which have deficiencies related to low physical stability during storage.

"Overall, the project results contribute to increase knowledge about the nutritional and health properties of vegetable milks, in view of future industrial applications to develop innovative quality products suitable both for the general public and for specific groups," says Chelo González.

## About plant "milks"

The "milk" made from nuts and grains represent an alternative to animal milks and soy milk. They also have components of great nutritional value that can provide numerous health benefits for both consumer groups with specific problems ([lactose intolerance](#), allergic to cow's milk,

vegetarian...) as for the general population.

These plant "milks" are characterized by a profile of healthy fatty acids and carbohydrates with low glycaemic index (suitable for diabetics). Moreover, they constitute an important source of vitamins B and E, antioxidant compounds (phytosterols and/or polyphenols) and dietary fibre, which helps to improve intestinal health.

They are also rich in potassium and very low in sodium, so these drinks help maintain a healthy balance of electrolytes.

The "milks" derived from [nuts](#) are especially recommended for [pregnant women](#) because of its richness in folic acid and its good calcium/phosphorus ratio. "This last property, together with the absence of lactose, milk protein and gluten, are what make these drinks good substitutes for cow's milk," concludes Chelo González.

Provided by Asociacion RUVID

Citation: The alternative to yogurt (2014, January 5) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-01-alternative-yogurt.html>

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