

Project to develop sausages with antioxidants from berries to prevent cancer

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Sausages with antioxidants from berries to prevent cancer

An EU-funded research project is to make sausages, patties and other meat products healthier in the future. Researchers at Lund University in Sweden, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and four other European research institutions have launched a joint project to reduce the risk of colon cancer – the most common cancer of the gastrointestinal tract in Sweden.

Making processed meats healthier is a high priority among the world's

food researchers – not least after the World Health Organisation (WHO) recently classified smoked and processed [meat products](#) as Group 1 carcinogens. The same group also includes tobacco products and alcohol.

The classification means that WHO now believes that there is as much evidence that processed meats are carcinogens as there is for tobacco and alcohol. However, WHO does not assess that the products are equally harmful. Eva Tornberg, professor of Food Technology at Lund University, thinks that WHO should have waited to issue their warning about the meats, as it is not yet clear what causes colon cancer because the statement was made based on purely epidemiological studies.

"Meat is a nutritious and non-allergenic food product, with high levels of protein as well high levels of necessary minerals and vitamin B. Making a serious statement like that about such a basic [food](#) product will perhaps make people no longer adhere to the warnings", says Eva Tornberg.

Eva Tornberg, Åsa Håkansson and doctoral student Stina Burri of Food Technology at the Faculty of Engineering (LTH) at Lund University, together with Kimmo Rumpunen at Balsgård, SLU, are currently conducting an EU-level research project, together with a number of other European partner institutions. The project aims to minimise oxidation in processed meat products, which, according to their hypothesis, will lead to a reduction of colon cancer – one the most common cancers in Sweden, with over 5 000 new patients annually.

Simply explained, the project involves extracting [antioxidants](#) from plants and berries, and then prepare meat products with these antioxidants. Animal testing will afterwards show whether this reduces the occurrence of cancer or not.

"If this hypothesis proves to be true, it will indicate that the risk of [colon cancer](#) can be reduced by eating a balanced diet – in other words,

together with meat, eat lots of vegetables and other things that contain antioxidants. In short, the old 'model plate' diet could once again prove to be beneficial. Sausages prepared with antioxidants could be an option to reduce the risk of those who, despite all the advice, still do not get enough antioxidants", says Eva Tornberg.

Provided by Lund University

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