

Could a beetroot a day keep the doctor at bay?

19 May 2016, by Amanda Weaver



A QUT study seeks people aged between 60 and 70 to discover whether beetroot juice could be a new 'super food' to improve vascular health in older people.

A QUT study is underway to discover whether beetroot juice could be a new 'super food' to improve vascular health, including blood coagulation and boosting immune cells, in older people and volunteers are wanted to take part.

Dr Oliver Neubauer, from QUT's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, is seeking healthy men and women aged between 60 and 70 to take part in the world-first project. All they have to do is have blood samples taken before and after drinking [beetroot juice](#).

"Beetroot juice is naturally rich in nitrate and recent discoveries have shown the benefits of dietary nitrate to humans," Dr Neubauer said.

"Dietary nitrate elicits anti-inflammatory, anti-coagulative and anti-thrombotic effects, all of which are beneficial for the [health](#) of [blood vessels](#)."

"Our study is the first to investigate the immediate effects of beetroot juice on factors affecting [vascular health](#), particularly blood clotting, the body's [immune cells](#) characteristics, blood pressure and inflammatory issues in mature-aged people.

"The research will provide us with important information on the potential for a lifestyle-based intervention involving beetroot juice to prevent some age-associated diseases, preserve the function of blood vessels and promote healthy ageing."

Dr Neubauer said he was looking for men and women between 60 and 70 in a normal weight range with no evidence of acute or chronic diseases like severe cardiovascular disease, pulmonary, neural or musculoskeletal disease, osteoporotic fractures or diabetes.

"They must also be non-smokers, not suffering from acute or chronic pain and not engaged in regular exercise training," he said.

"To take part in the study volunteers are required to undergo a health screening which includes medical history, questionnaires on diet and physical activity and measurement of resting [blood pressure](#) and heart rate.

"If they are eligible to participate we then need them to come to our laboratories on two separate occasions over a two-week period. On each visit they will have blood and heart activities measured and [blood](#) collections taken at three and six hours after drinking either nitrate-rich or nitrate-depleted beetroot juice."

Dr Neubauer said the nitrate-depleted beetroot juice was provided by a UK firm and was only used for research purposes as a placebo.

He added that while there was some loss of nitrate in washing, peeling and/or cooking beetroots, the

health benefits remained high and the same applied to other nitrate-rich foods such as [leafy green vegetables](#).

"Beetroots, like all fruit and vegetables, have multiple benefits, but the fact they are rich in nitrates puts them into the 'super food' category," he said.

More information: For more information and to participate in the study, contact the research team on 3138 6174 or email oliver.neubauer@qut.edu.au or kyle.raubenheimer@qut.edu.au

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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