

Probiotics may be able to help you keep slim

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Researchers from LIFE - Faculty of Life Sciences at University of Copenhagen are working on a promising research project that seems to indicate that probiotics have a slimming effect.

Nutrition researchers from LIFE and Chr. Hansen, a Danish biotech company, are collaborating on a groundbreaking [weight](#) management research project dubbed "Prosat". The objective is to investigate the use of probiotics for weight control.

"With excess body weight a growing problem around the world, weight management is indisputably a major health issue today. This project will significantly improve our understanding of the bacterial intestinal flora's importance in individual [weight management](#)," says Professor Arne Vernon Astrup, MD, DMSc. An internationally acclaimed nutrition and obesity academic, Astrup today heads up the Department of Human Nutrition at LIFE - Faculty of Life Sciences.

Initial results in a previous research project indicate that specific probiotic derivatives do have an interesting satiety effect. It is too early to draw any conclusions " However, if this project demonstrates a link between probiotics and satiety, consumers around the world will have a groundbreaking new, documented means to help them maintain a healthy weight balance," explains Professor Astrup.

It is the aim of Chr. Hansen and the researchers to develop scientifically documented probiotic solutions suitable for food and nutraceutical applications which will trigger the consumer's feeling of fullness. In this

way, food intake is likely to be reduced, thereby contributing to a healthy weight balance. The target population is slightly overweight to standard weight individuals who want to maintain a [healthy weight](#) balance.

A British analysis of 57 studies recently published in The Lancet (Whitlock 2009) concluded that even moderate obesity cuts life expectancy by about three years.

"This project makes use of a unique and sophisticated [animal model](#) to study satiety parameters," explains Professor, DMSc Jens Juul Holst - an internationally renowned academic expert on gastro-intestinal hormones who co-represents University of Copenhagen in the project. "One possible mechanism of action for satiating probiotics is that they may cause a release of satiety inducing hormones from the gut. We are studying this directly in surviving segments of the small intestine from pigs which resemble humans very much in this respect," Holst explains.

Chr. Hansen carries out research in the slimming effect of probiotics with the purpose of developing new, innovative products for the growing market for food and dietary supplements that can control our feeling of satiety.

"We are in close contact with a number of leading, international players in the food industry", says Lars Bredmose, marketing director at Chr. Hansen. "However, there are many potential candidates. Therefore, we have aimed, right from the beginning, to work, on the basis of basic science, with some of the most competent researchers in the area".

Source: University of Copenhagen

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