

Sugar is good for a sweet heart: new study

December 5 2011

(Medical Xpress) -- A new type of sugar could help prevent heart disease, according to latest research by Dr Corin Storkey and Professor Carl Schiesser from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Free Radical Chemistry and Biotechnology at The University of Melbourne.

Together with Professor Michael Davies from the Heart Research Institute, Sydney, Dr Storkey and Professor Schiesser have formulated promising new heart disease preventatives based on sugar and [selenium](#).

Their initial findings have been published in The Royal Society of Chemistry journal, *Chemical Communications*, while the compounds themselves have been filed under an international patent with the hope of future clinical use.

“Mary Poppins was right in saying - a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down. Although these compounds are not the kind of [sugar](#) most people would buy as a Valentine’s Day gift we are still very excited by their potential to maintain a healthy heart,” says Dr Storkey.

Dr Storkey, a former contestant on the popular Channel 7 TV show, *Beauty and the Geek*, and now a scientist at the Heart Research Institute, made the discovery while working towards his PhD under the guidance of Professor Schiesser at the Bio21 Institute, University of Melbourne.

“Our seleno-sugar compounds work by scavenging hypohalous acids, a group of highly reactive chemicals that can damage tissues when produced in the wrong place, at the wrong time or at excessive levels,”

says Professor Schiesser. “One predictor of future heart disease in patients is the raised level of the enzyme that produces these hypohalous acids.”

[Heart disease](#) was the leading cause of death in Australia in 2009, accounting for 16% of all deaths and more than car accidents, HIV and cancer combined according to data released by the ABS earlier this year.

The group discovered their seleno-sugar compounds are able to prevent hypohalous acids from damaging important amino acids in human plasma, a key step in stopping the development of disease. They are now working to optimise their [compounds](#) for future pharmaceutical use.

“We are hoping that in the future our new chemicals will keep matters of the heart sweet,” says Dr Storkey. “Well, at least health-wise!”

Provided by University of Melbourne

Citation: Sugar is good for a sweet heart: new study (2011, December 5) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-12-sugar-good-sweet-heart.html>

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