

A muffin a day might just keep the doctor away

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Dr Nima Gunness and her good heart muffin. Credit: University of Queensland

Baking meets science in a delicious University of Queensland health initiative that really takes the cake.

'Good heart' muffin, developed by UQ scientists, could help lower the risk of heart disease.

UQ Centre for Nutrition and Food Sciences scientist and keen baker Dr Nima Gunness said the muffins contained three grams of beta glucans – a healthy soluble fibre that occurs naturally in the cell walls of oats and

cereals, and meets the food standard guidelines for cholesterol-lowering properties.

"There is good [evidence](#) that three grams or more of oats beta glucan consumption a day can help reduce [cholesterol levels](#)," Dr Gunness said.

Her work follows an [earlier discovery](#) by UQ and the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence in Plant Cell Walls that demonstrated how beta glucan fibre in oats can slow absorption of fats to reduce blood cholesterol.

"I wanted to turn my discovery into a product, like a muffin, that people could eat to help reduce the amount of cholesterol in their blood stream, lowering the risk of [heart disease](#)."

Dr Gunness perfected her low-fat blueberry muffin recipe over several months.

"The trick was to avoid making the muffin gluggy from all the extra oat bran and beta glucan fibre."



Credit: University of Queensland

Now UQ's commercialisation company UniQuest and a UQ Business School student are identifying opportunities for the muffins to be packaged, frozen, and sold in supermarkets, cafés and health food outlets around the country.

"We are not suggesting that people go off any cholesterol-lowering medication," Dr Gunness said.

"Rather, we are aiming to provide a convenient, healthy and very tasty way of helping to reduce cholesterol levels."

Through UniQuest, Dr Gunness is working with Australian food company Priestley's Gourmet Delights to manufacture and taste-test a batch of 'good heart' muffins.

"I was really amazed by how positive the consumer feedback has been," she said.

"It's very exciting to see a simple everyday product come out of some fairly complex research.

"Eating a muffin a day is a convenient way for people to improve their heart health."

Provided by University of Queensland

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