



# Making inulin work for you

Subject : Health benefits of novel fibers: fiber, gut microbes and immunity

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## Health benefits of novel fibers

**Bethesda USA, July 7<sup>th</sup> 2010 – Diederick Meyer gave a lecture at the 9th Vahouny Fiber Symposium that took place in Bethesda (USA) from June 8-11, 2010. The lecture was part of the session: “Health benefits of novel fibers: fiber, gut microbes and immunity” (sponsored by General Mills) and focussed on inulin, gut microbes and health”.**

An overview was presented of the prebiotic activity of inulin and oligofructose as found in human volunteers of all ages and the associated health benefits. The following aspects were covered: what are the effective dosages in different target groups for the prebiotic effects and for the physiological effects. What evidence is available from studies with human volunteers to underpin these effects (and possibly health claims)?

The physiological effects are: improved mineral (calcium and magnesium) absorption, lowering of serum lipids, increased feelings of satiety with subsequent lowered food and energy intake, and effects on lowering risk of colorectal cancer as well as immune stimulatory effects. Each of these may have its consequences for (part of) our health: (gut) health might be improved due to the effects on the immune system or resistance to infections and on risk of colon cancer, whilst improved calcium absorption contributes to better bone health. Obviously, the lowered food and energy intake due to inulin consumption impacts weight management, whilst heart health may be improved by a lowered level of serum cholesterol, a risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

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