

'Super spaghetti' is here!

By: AFP

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Scientists in Italy and Spain have developed a new type of pasta dubbed "super spaghetti" made with nutritious barley flour that may reduce the risk of heart disease.



Barley, the latest addition to the functional food craze, is an excellent source of fiber, antioxidants and vitamin E.

Researchers Vito Verardo of the University of Bologna in Italy and Ana Maria Gomez-Caravaca of the University of Granada in Spain say that consumers may soon see packages of barley pasta labeled with the phrases "may reduce the risk of heart disease" and "good source of dietary fiber."

The new report was announced last week and published in the American Chemical Society's Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry.

The functional foods craze has caught on around the world with health-conscious consumers, creating an industry that is expected to reach over \$176 billion by 2013. Barley, which has already been added to some bakery products, has slowly been encroaching on the dairy-dominated industry to take up a quarter of the market.

Other functional pastas of the future? Researchers in Mexico claim that using unripe banana flour can be a healthful alternative to wheat flour since banana flour contains antioxidants and fiber, according to a study published in the Journal of Food Science.

Meanwhile, until these products hit the market, you can rely on whole wheat or other high-fiber pastas to fit the bill. But for traditional pasta lovers, the chewier, denser texture may take some getting used to. WebMD suggests making whole wheat pastas more appealing by serving with rich, flavorful sauces or layered (like lasagna) with sauce, cheese and vegetables.