

Robot to process food samples in a jiffy

Researchers have devised a robot to act as an artificial gut to process food samples at a fraction of the time and cost required by the standard human method.

This will help food manufacturers develop a wider range of healthy food products far more cheaply and quickly than possible previously.

David Topping, chief research scientist with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Food Futures National Research Flagship, said the device is being commercialised to help address the growing global demand for food with defined health benefits through low glycemic index (GI) and higher resistant starch (RS) content.

The glycemic index or GI ranks carbohydrates according to their effect on our blood glucose levels.

'This instrument will be a valuable tool for manufacturers as they develop new formulations and processes to make the products which consumers need,' Topping said. 'The new device will make preliminary testing quicker, easier and more cost-effective, thus accelerating the path to market for these new foods.'

Jonathan Shaw, associate director of the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute in Melbourne, said the institute's research team has been working with CSIRO to validate results obtained from the device, according to a CSIRO release.

'With the growing epidemic of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease... there is increasing demand for low GI and high RS foods. Consumers really need greater access to products with appropriate health benefits, and we believe this new GI and RS predictor will help achieve that goal,' Shaw said.

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