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New spaghetti a source of fiber

Published: Sept. 17, 2011 at 11:51 PM

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BOLOGNA, Italy, Sept. 17 (UPI) -- A new pasta made with barley may soon be labeled a "good source of dietary fiber" and "may reduce the heart disease risk," researchers in Italy and Spain say.

Vito Verardo of the University of Bologna in Italy, Ana Maria Gomez-Caravaca of the University of Granada in Spain and colleagues explain that barley, a grain that is an excellent source of fiber and antioxidants, is gaining interest as an ingredient in so-called "functional foods" -- a genre of foods that are supplemented with healthful additives.

To determine whether barley could make a new functional spaghetti by providing fiber and antioxidants, the researchers developed a barley flour, that contains the most nutritious part of the grain and used it to make pasta.

The researchers find that the barley spaghetti has more fiber and more antioxidant activity than traditional semolina-based spaghetti. Adding gluten to barley flour improves the cooking quality of the pasta, they say, but lowers its antioxidant activity.

The study is published in the journal *Agricultural and Food Chemistry*.

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