

Bio-engineered yogurt could make colonoscopies obsolete

A spoonful of yogurt could soon offer a cheap and simple way to screen for colorectal cancer.

Sangeeta Bhatia, a professor at MIT, is working to replace costly and uncomfortable colonoscopies and MRIs with a helping of yogurt followed by a urine test—a cheap method that could improve the early diagnosis of colorectal cancer.

Bhatia is developing synthetic molecules that can be introduced into the body via yogurt, and will interact with cancer in a way that produces telltale biomarkers. These molecules can then be detected easily when passed in urine.

The first iteration of the technique involved the use of lab instruments to analyze urine and find the telltale markers. Now Bhatia has developed a paper-based urine test—like the one you'd use for pregnancy. So far this test has been demonstrated in mice for colorectal cancer and liver fibrosis.

Bhatia hopes the approach will “transform diagnostics,” and says she’s in the process of forming a company to commercialize the approach. Because the test requires no specialized equipment, it will be particularly helpful in poor countries, she says, where few people are currently screened for common cancers. But it might also replace or augment colonoscopies.

Read full, original article: [Cancer-Detecting Yogurt Could Replace Colonoscopies](#)