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Antioxidant ice cream invented by Italian professor shown to help people run faster

'Who says that health foods have to taste bad?'

Dave Maclean | Wednesday 26 October 2016 | [5 comments](#)



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Could gelato actually make you better at sport? One professor seems to think so *Getty Images/iStockphoto*

A cardiologist and ice-cream enthusiast has created a gelato which he says will make you live longer and run faster.

Prof Valerio Sanguigni, from the University of Rome Tor Vergata, has patented a recipe for ice cream which has antioxidant properties.

The exact recipe is secret but contains dark cocoa powder, hazelnut, and green tea extracts.

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They're known to have antioxidant properties, which can help to improve heart health and prevent certain diseases.

Tests on human subjects at his university showed a marked improvement in the performance of those who ate it.

Participants had blood tests taken before and after sampling the gelato, and were asked to pedal as fast as they could on an exercise bike.

A standard chocolate ice cream was used as a placebo on some of the participants.

The tests found that vascular function was improved in participants who had eaten the new ice cream, while no changes were observed in those who ate the placebo.

The results were published in the scientific journal **Nutrition**.

Prof Sanguigni's research document concluded: "To our knowledge, this is the first study to demonstrate that a natural ice cream rich in polyphenols acutely improved vascular function and physical performance in healthy individuals through a reduction in oxidative stress."

He said low, controlled temperatures are best way to conserve the antioxidant properties of foods, which is why he chose to add

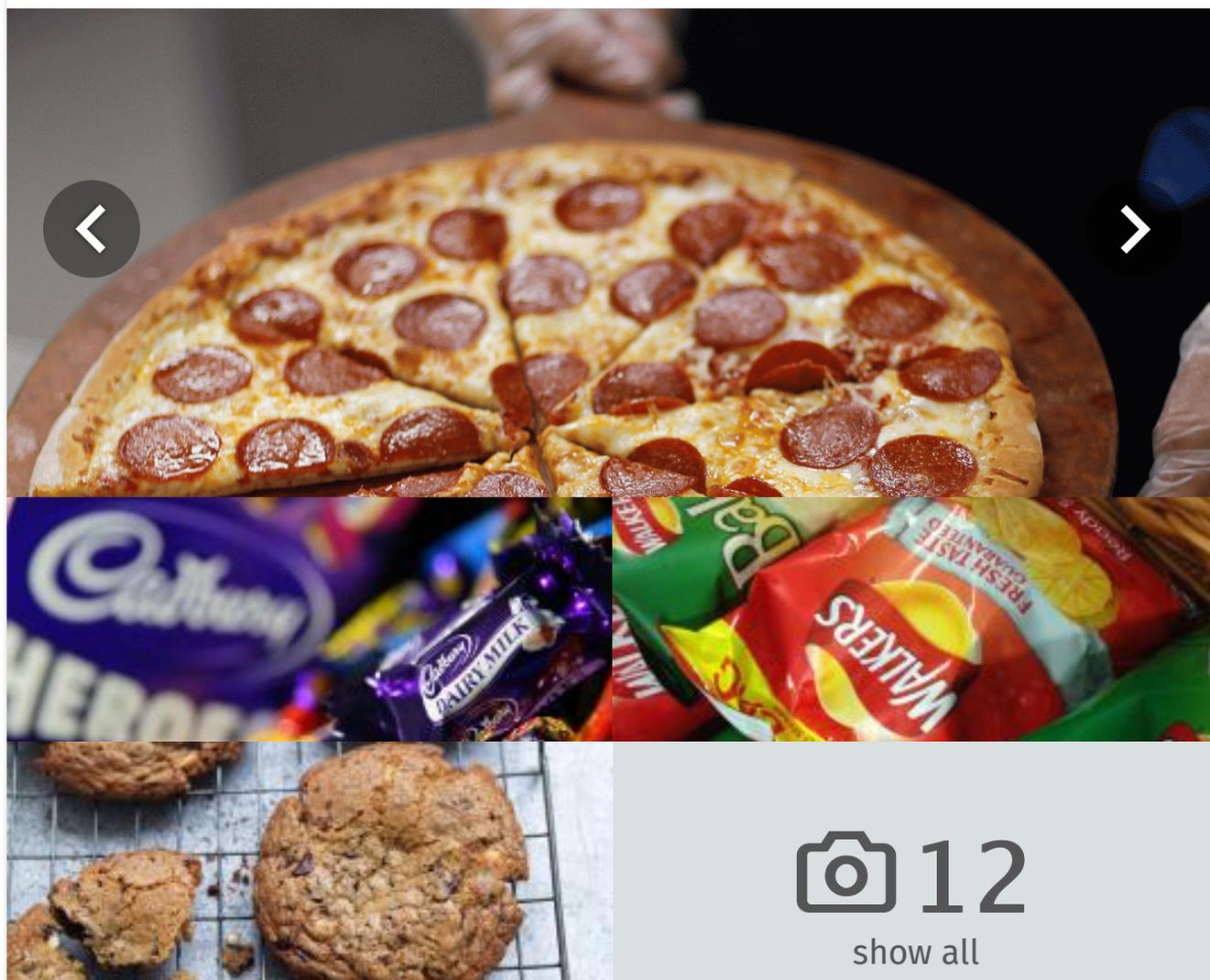
them to gelato.

"There is talk of red berries, pomegranates, goji berries (having antioxidant properties). But I found that many foods from farm to our table, they lose their properties. The foods that best preserve these substances are precisely dried fruit, cocoa beans and green tea, especially at low, controlled temperatures."

He added: "Who says that health foods have to taste bad?"

If the findings are confirmed, gelato could be added to the pantheon of Italian foods with antioxidant properties.

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They include red wine, extra virgin olive oil and tomatoes, which are all thought to contribute to the longevity of Italians.

The number of centenarians has tripled in less than 15 years. ●

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