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## Erythritol is a sweet antioxidant

Gertjan J.M. den Hartog, Ph.D., Agnes W. Boots, Ph.D.<sup>a</sup>, Aline Adam-Perrot, Ph.D.<sup>bt</sup>, Fred Brouns, Ph.D.<sup>c</sup>, Inge W.C.M. Verkooijen, M.Sc.<sup>d</sup>, Antje R. Weseler, Ph.D.<sup>a</sup>, Guido R.M.M. Haenen, Ph.D.<sup>a</sup>, Aalt Bast, Ph.D.<sup>a</sup>

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### Abstract

#### Objective

Hyperglycemia, oxidative stress, and the onset and progression of diabetic complications are strongly linked. Reduction of oxidative stress could be of utmost importance in the long-term treatment of diabetic patients. The chronic nature of the disease calls for a mode of antioxidant intake that can be sustained easily, e.g., by the diet. Erythritol, a simple polyol, could be such a compound. It is orally available, well tolerated, and its chemical structure resembles that of mannitol, a well-known hydroxyl radical (HO·) scavenger.

#### Methods

We studied the antioxidant properties of erythritol in vitro and subsequently determined its antioxidant activity and its vasoprotective effect in the streptozotocin diabetic rat.

#### Results

Erythritol was shown to be an excellent HO· radical scavenger and an inhibitor of 2,2'-azobis-2-amidinopropane dihydrochloride-induced hemolysis but inert toward superoxide radicals. High-performance liquid chromatographic and electron spin resonance spectroscopy studies showed that the reaction of erythritol with hydroxyl radicals resulted in the formation of erythrose and erythrulose by abstraction of a carbon-bound hydrogen atom. In the streptozotocin diabetic rat, erythritol displayed an endothelium-protective effect and, in accordance with the in vitro experiments, erythrose was found in the urine of erythritol-consuming rats.

#### Conclusion

Erythritol acts as an antioxidant in vivo and may help protect against hyperglycemia-induced vascular damage.

**Keywords:** Erythritol, Diabetes, Oxidative stress, Rat

<sup>a</sup> Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, Maastricht University, Maastricht, The Netherlands

<sup>b</sup> Cargill R&D Center Europe, Vilvoorde, Belgium

<sup>c</sup> Department of Human Biology, Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, Maastricht University, Maastricht, The Netherlands

<sup>d</sup> Clinical Trial Center Maastricht, Maastricht, The Netherlands