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New Study Shows Improved Digestive Health & Strengthened Defences in Children Thanks to Chicory Root Fibres

A recently published scientific studyⁱ by Professor Tamás Decsi and Szimonetta Lohner at the Department of Paediatrics, University of Pécs, Hungary, has shown important health benefits in kindergarten children aged 3 to 6 years, as a result of consuming prebiotic chicory root fibres. Previous studies have demonstrated a strengthening of the natural defence system on infants and children between birth and two years of age. However, this is the first time this evidence has been established for this age group.

The human intervention studyⁱⁱ, which examined the supplementation of a daily dosage of 6g of chicory root fibre during the autumn and winter period, demonstrated various health benefits amongst children. These include improved gut microbiota composition, softer stools in a normal range and fewer incidences of infections in the group of 3 – 6-year old children. The study, conducted over six months with a double-blind, placebo controlled design, also confirmed that chicory root fibre was very well tolerated.

Regular intake of a dedicated composition of chicory root fibre, a variant of Orafti[®] inulinⁱⁱⁱ, was found to support the gut microbiota of the children by increasing bifidobacterial and lactobacilli numbers. This resulted in lower numbers of fever episodes requiring a physician's consultation and sinusitis in kindergarten children. In addition, the positive effect on digestive health was further supported by a softer stool consistency.

Acute infections, particularly in the winter season, are common in kindergarten children. The negative impact of the children's poor well-being can be linked to increased health care costs and workday losses by the caretaking parent(s). This latest research highlights that the risk of such infections can be reduced by incorporating chicory root fibre, Orafti[®] inulin, into the daily diet of children to strengthen their defence forces and improve digestive health.

Anke Sentko, Vice President Regulatory Affairs and Nutrition Communication at BENEEO, comments: "This study demonstrates the importance of healthy, prevention orientated eating

also in this age group. By making small adjustments to your daily choices you can achieve significant improvements to your health status, from very early on. It also shows once again that your microbiota composition matters. With the prebiotic chicory root fibres used in this study, we can strengthen their natural defence forces. These are very exciting results that can be achieved by these particular dietary fibres.”

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The BENEEO-Institute is an organization which brings together BENEEO’s expertise from Nutrition Science and Legislation teams. It acts as an advisory body for customers and partners reaching from ingredient approval, physiological effects and nutritional composition to communication and labelling. The key nutritional topics of the BENEEO-Institute’s work include weight management, digestive health, bone health, physical and mental performance, the effects of a low glycaemic diet as well as dental health.

The BENEEO-Institute facilitates access to the latest scientific research and knowledge throughout all nutritional and regulatory topics related to BENEEO ingredients. It provides BENEEO customers and partners with substantiated guidance for some of the most critical questions in the food industry. BENEEO is a division of the Südzucker Group that employs more than 900 people and has production units in Belgium, Chile, Germany and Italy.

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ⁱ “Inulin-type fructan supplementation in 3 to 6 year-old children is associated with higher fecal bifidobacterial levels and fewer febrile episodes requiring medical attention”

ⁱⁱ The human intervention study was randomised, parallel, double-blind and placebo-controlled

ⁱⁱⁱ A dedicated mixture of shorter and longer chains of inulin-type fructans described in the study via the DP (DP \geq 11 approx. 25-30% (on g/100g DM), average DP of about 7 to 8).