

Scientists discover new vitamin

Found in papaya, green tea and other foods, PQQ plays role in [fertility](#)

TOKYO, April 24 — Japanese scientists have discovered a new vitamin that plays an important role in [fertility](#) in mice and may have a similar function in humans, the research leader said on Thursday.

PQQ is the first new vitamin to be discovered since 1948, the institute said.

A RESEARCH team led by Takafumi Kato confirmed that pyrroloquinoline quinone, a substance discovered in 1979, can be categorized as a vitamin.

Mice deprived of PQQ suffer reduced fertility and roughened fur, the Tokyo-based Institute of Physical and Chemical Research said in a news release. Vitamins that have an important effect on mice usually act in the same way in humans, Kato said.

"There are many possible factors behind the drop in fertility," Kato said. "We need more research to find out exactly what is happening to these mice and what would be the effect on humans."

PQQ is the first new vitamin to be discovered since 1948, the institute said. Vitamins are defined as organic substances needed in small quantities for health and growth. They must be obtained from food as they cannot be produced by the body.

The best source of PQQ discovered so far is "natto," a pungent Japanese dish of fermented soybeans. Other foods rich in the substance include [parsley, green tea, green peppers, kiwi fruit and papaya.](#)

PQQ is not included in multi-vitamin tablets available on the market, the release said.

There are 13 other types of vitamins already known, and PQQ is believed to belong to the vitamin B group, the release said.

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