

CAN LUPIN HELP ME MANAGE MY DIABETES?

I have been reading about how a Western Australian grain/pulse called a Lupin, and in particular a product called *Lupin+ Formula*, can help with blood glucose response and the release of insulin from the pancreas.

The manufacturer, a Registered Nutritionist, claims when it is added to meals or drinks, it can assist with type 2 diabetes management plans. I need to lose some weight, and the product claims Lupins, Resistant Starch, and Soy protein can assist with controlling food cravings and appetite.

Do you believe this product would be a safe inclusion to my diet, and also my current diabetes management plan?

RESPONSE

The research into lupin protein appears to have been inspired by traditional use of lupin seeds as treatment for diabetes

in South America and the Mediterranean. Lupin is widely used in food products in Europe mainly in flour-based products such as pasta, bread, cereals, pastries, baby foods, and soups, and there is increasing interest in lupins for human consumption in Australia. Currently, most of the lupin crops grown in Australia are used for animal food.

Lupins contain 30-40% protein but are higher in fibre, 30%, and have a lower oil content, 6%, and only contain a small amount of starch. Thus, lupins are low GI foods, and have the lowest GI of all commonly eaten grains. Most of the protein is an amino acid called arginine, which has many important functions in the body.

Research suggests foods enriched with lupins such as the *Lupin + formula*, improve blood glucose control because of the low GI and low starch content, improve blood lipids by lowering cholesterol without affecting HDL, and reduced blood pressure. Lupins also

appear to slow absorption of food from the intestine into the blood stream, which helps reduce the amount of insulin secreted and control appetite because people feel fuller for longer, so it could help with weight control. In addition, lupins do not contain gluten so lupin products are suitable for people with coeliac disease, provided they do not also contain gluten-containing foods.

There are some reports of allergic reactions to lupins. Although these reactions are rare, they can be serious. The constituents in lupins responsible for allergic reactions are also found in peanuts; therefore, people with peanut allergies could react to lupins. People with known allergies should check with their doctors before using lupin-containing products.

One problem is that food labels do not always indicate the product contains lupins, however, it is likely mandatory labeling will be required soon. **E**