Creation and Assessment of Functional Foods for Long-Duration Space Missions

Maya R. Cooper
Leidos
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Functional foods should be considered in long-duration mission planning.

• The physiological impact of space travel on humans will likely be exacerbated on long-duration missions without countermeasures.
  • Bone mineral density loss, muscle atrophy, space radiation impacts, reduced immune function, eye health, psychological stress

• “Direct reuse and repurposing of logistical items to avoid flying separate items to meet both functions” – Broyan et. al. 2014 on Advanced Exploration Systems Logistics Reduction and Repurposing (LRR) approaches

• By definition, functional foods move beyond necessity to provide additional health benefits that may reduce disease risk and/or promote optimal health.
Key Questions on Functional Food Implementation

• Which compounds have supporting evidence to indicate functionality?

• Are these compounds stable in space food?

• Can we develop foods with these compounds that also meet the other requirements for space food (microbial safety, high sensory acceptability, nutritional stability, multi-year shelf life, minimal free liquid or crumbing)?
Study Design

• Selection of bioactive compounds:
  - Lycopene (cancer and CVD prevention, bone health)
  - Lutein (eye health)
  - Flavonoids (reduction of risk of chronic diseases, bone health)
  - Sterols (cholesterol reduction)
  - Omega-3 fatty acids (CVD prevention, bone health)
  - Total phenolics (reduction of risk of cancer, diabetes, and CVD)
3 years of 5-year study complete

Analysis includes:

- 15 ISS provisioning food items
- 12 commercial foods
- 18 developed foods

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RESULTS TO DATE
Fish-derived omega-3 fatty acids are stable at ambient temperatures in processed foods.
Lycopene concentrations decline at 21°C yet adequate lycopene remains at beneficial amounts for 2 years.
The evidence does not support lutein stability at 21°C storage nor that 6 mg lutein per day is easily delivered in one serving of FD vegetables.
Total phenolics in fruit samples appeared to increase or remain stable over the storage period.
Detection of total anthocyanins was quite variable; stability may be tied to the food matrix.
Sterols are stable across time and storage temperatures in processed foods.
Sensory Results – Commercial Foods

### Overall Acceptability Ratings for Commercial Functional Foods After 2-Year Ambient Storage

- **Chicken of the Sea Premium Smoked Salmon (T)**
- **Bumblebee Sensations Sundried Tomato & Basil Seasoned Tuna Medley (T)**
- **StarKist Tuna Creations Sweet and Spicy (T)**
- **Kashi Heart to Heart Nutty Chia Flax Cereal (LM)**
- **Nature’s Path Flax Plus Maple Pecan Crunch Cereal (LM)**
- **Just Apples – Organic (LM)**
- **DelMonte Fruit Burst Squeezers Fruit + Veggie Blueberry Flavor (T)**
- **Planters NUTrition Heart Healthy Mix (LM)**
- **Stretch Island Fruit Co All Natural Fruit Strips: Harvest Grape (LM)**
- **SunMaid California Pitted Prunes (LM)**
- **Oatmega Blueberry Pomegranate Bar (LM)**

*Minimum Acceptability Threshold*

*Discontinued sensory due to low initial acceptability*
Sensory Results – Developed Foods

Overall Acceptability Ratings for Developed Functional Foods After 2-Year Ambient Storage

- Baja Fish Taco (FD)
- Crab Bisque (FD)
- Vegetable Casserole (T)
- Watermelon Salad (FD)
- Honey Ginger Fish (T)
- Spicy Greens (FD)
- Vegetable Root Patties (FD)
- Mango Salad (FD)
- Pickled Beets
- Curry Pumpkin Soup (T)
- Braised Red Cabbage (FD)
- Salmon Croquettes (FD)
- Couscous with Nuts (FD)
- Roasted Brussels Sprouts (FD)
- Roasted Butternut Squash (FD)
- Sweet and Savory Kale (FD)
- Indian Fish Curry (T)
- Turkish Fish Stew (T)

Hedonic Scale Rating (1-Dislike Extremely to 9-Like Extremely)
Study Implications

• Functional foods that can be incorporated into the space food system though multiple menu servings each day will likely be required for beneficial levels of lutein, sterols, and total phenolics.

• Additions of functional foods can result from either commercial food application or product development with similar results in product stability and flavor acceptability. Very specific applications and extended shelf life needs tend to favor product development.

• Reduced-temperature storage should be considered to retard the degradation of carotenoids and anthocyanins in storage.
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