

Food

Nestlé launches research partnership on healthy ageing



Research into the influence of nutrition on healthy ageing and women's health is being conducted in a Nestlé research laboratory near Lausanne. (symbolic image)

Keystone

The food company Nestlé has launched a partnership with the research university NTU in Singapore to investigate the influence of nutrition on healthy ageing and women's health.

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The aim of the collaboration is to provide a scientific basis for new nutritional products - for example, along the lines of special Mediterranean diets that can slow down biological ageing.

The cooperation is intended to deliver concrete applications, for example to improve metabolism, mobility, sleep or menopausal symptoms. Nestlé wants to translate the findings into new products and services, such as functional drinks for people from midlife onwards.

The partnership is planned to run for five years, as a Nestlé spokesperson told the news agency AWP on Thursday. A joint research laboratory with infrastructure for data analysis and clinical studies is planned. Publications and conferences are also planned.

Responding to demographic trends

The researchers will be able to draw on study data from around 50,000 people aged between 21 and 84 in Singapore over the course of a decade. According to the company spokesperson, it is not yet clear how much Nestlé is willing to pay for all this.

The researchers are to build on findings that a targeted diet can help to slow down the biological ageing process. One example is a special Mediterranean diet with lots of vegetables, fruit, wholegrain products, olive oil, nuts and fish as well as little red meat. A particularly polyphenol-rich variant of this also contains many so-called polyphenols - plant micronutrients with an antioxidant effect, which are found in green tea, berries or plants such as mankai.

Life expectancy exceeds healthy lifespan

In a clinical study conducted in 2023 with 294 people over 18 months, a polyphenol-rich Mediterranean diet led to a measurable slowdown in biological ageing. Specifically, biological age was reduced by up to 18 months. With a classic Mediterranean diet, the effect was around 9 months.

According to a press release, Nestlé is responding to demographic trends with this research project: by 2030, one in six people worldwide will be aged 60 or over. At the same time, there is a growing gap between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy.

This difference was around 9.6 years in 2019 and has increased by 13% since 2000. Many people would therefore spend almost ten years of their lives in poor health.