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**Gastric emptying and plasma glucose  
response in men following ingestion of  
milk from different species**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Science in  
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## Abstract

The  $^{13}\text{C}$  Octanoic acid breath test (OABT) was used to measure the rate of gastric emptying of whole goat's milk (WG), whole cow's milk (WC), goat's milk infant formula (GIF) and cow's milk infant formula (CIF) in healthy, adult men.

Prior to the gastric emptying study, the integrity of the vacuum in two commonly used gas collection tubes was tested. The experiment showed that the Exetainer® brand of tube was more suitable for collecting expired air compared to the Vacutainer® brand based on the fact that it had less residual dead-space which could dilute expired air samples.

Fifteen healthy men were given one of the four test milks containing  $100\mu\text{g } ^{13}\text{C}$  octanoic acid after an overnight fast. Breath samples were collected at regular intervals for four hours. Following analysis by ratio isotope mass spectrometry, gastric emptying parameters were calculated.

The gastric emptying half time ( $t_{1/2}$ ) of CIF was significantly shorter ( $P<0.05$ ) than that of GIF (120 min vs. 159 min), but there were no differences in the rate of emptying between WC (141 min) and WG (150 min). There were no significant differences between either of the infant formulas and the whole milks.

Blood samples were taken concurrently with the expired air samples. The samples were analysed to determine plasma glucose concentration. The results showed that the timing of the peaks of plasma glucose levels and subsequent drop to below baseline concentration may be associated with the rate of gastric emptying.

The manner in which the four test milks coagulated was also tested. Milks were incubated *in vitro* at  $37.5^\circ\text{C}$  after acidification with 1 molar HCl (to gastric pH 3) and addition of the enzyme pepsin. Vastly different coagulation properties were observed. The WC formed large curds with a clear separation between the whey-containing liquid and the curd whereas the WG and GIF were more homogenous with finer curds and considerably less clear fluid. The CIF exhibited very fine curds.

Differences in composition between whole goat's milk and whole cow's milk did not appear to be sufficient to elicit different rates of gastric emptying. Thus any nutritional differences between milk from the two species may not be related to the rate at which they are emptied from the stomach.

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This trial was approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (Protocol No. 04/19).

# Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Abstract	i
Acknowledgments	ii
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures	vii
<b>Chapter 1: General Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
References	4
<b>Chapter 2: Review of the literature relating to gastric emptying</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Anatomy and Histology of the stomach	8
2.3 Gastric Emptying	10
2.4 Gastric Emptying of the Different Phases of a Meal	17
2.5 Other Factors That Influence the Rate of Gastric Emptying	20
2.6 The Gastric Emptying of Milk.	25
2.7 Composition of Goat's and Cow's Milk	28
2.8 Measuring the Rate of Gastric Emptying	30
2.9 Conclusion and Inferences from the Review of Literature	37
2.10 References	38
<b>Chapter 3: Comparison of the effectiveness of two types of container used for the collection of expired air samples in the <sup>13</sup>C octanoic acid breath test</b>	<b>52</b>
3.1 Abstract	53
3.2 Introduction	53
3.3 Method	55
3.4 Results	56
3.5 Conclusion	56
3.6 References	57

<b>Chapter 4: Gastric emptying of whole milks and infant formulas derived from either the goat or cow in healthy adult men</b>	<b>58</b>
4.1 Abstract	59
4.2 Introduction	60
4.3 Materials and Methods	61
4.4 Results	66
4.5 Discussion	73
4.5 Discussion	74
4.6 References	77
<b>Chapter 5: Plasma glucose levels in response to the ingestion of milks from different species</b>	<b>81</b>
5.1 Abstract	82
5.2 Introduction	82
5.3 Materials and Methods	82
5.4 Results	84
5.5 Discussion	89
5.6 References	93
<b>Chapter 6: General Discussion and Conclusions</b>	<b>95</b>
References	100
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>103</b>

## List of Tables

<b>Table</b>		<b>Page</b>
1A	Composition of the milk from different mammal species.	2
2A	Comparative results of previous studies in infants comparing the rate of gastric emptying of breast milk with infant formula.	26
2B	Composition of goat's and cow's milk.	28
2C	Techniques both historically, and currently used to assess gastric emptying.	30
4A	Nutrient composition of test milks (units per 100ml) when reconstituted as advised by manufacturer.	63
4B	Ingredients of test milks used in a gastric emptying study in adult men.	64
4C	Results of compositional analysis of test milks (units / 100ml) when reconstituted according to manufacturers instructions.	67
4D	Determined percentage of whey and casein in the test milks used in a gastric emptying study conducted with adult men.	67
4E	Fatty acid composition of test milks used in a gastric emptying study with adult men.	68
4F	Gastric emptying half time ( $t_{1/2}$ ) and time to maximum excretion rate ( $t_{max}$ ) for the four test milks.	71
5A	Mean relative blood glucose concentrations (with standard deviation, standard error of the means and maximum and minimum values) of healthy men following the consumption of four test milks.	86

## List of Figures

Figure		Page
2A	Functional and anatomical regions of the stomach.	8
2B	Neural and hormonal signalling from the gut.	11
2C	The four neural control levels of the gut.	12
3A	Two brands of commonly used gas collection tubes.	54
4A	Cow's milk infant formula, whole cow's milk, goat's milk infant formula and whole goat's milk following addition of 1M HCl and pepsin, and incubation at 37.5°C for 30 min.	70
4B	One mm deep layer (to show the extent of casein precipitation) of whole cow's milk and whole goat's milk following addition of 1M HCl and pepsin, and incubation at 37.50C for 30 min.	70
4C	One mm deep layer (to show the extent of casein precipitation) of cow's milk infant formula and goat's milk infant formula following addition of 1M HCl and pepsin, and incubation at 37.50C for 30min.	70
4D	Fitted curves for mean percentage of administered dose of $^{13}\text{C}$ recovered in breath per hour for the two infant formulas (CIF = cow'smilk infant formula, GIF = goats' milk infant formula). PDR/h = Percentage Dose of $^{13}\text{C}$ Recovered per hour.	72
4E	Fitted curve for mean percentage of administered dose of $^{13}\text{C}$ recovered in breath per hour for whole cow's milk (WC). PDR/h = Percentage Dose of $^{13}\text{C}$ Recovered per hour.	73



4F	Fitted curves for mean percentage of administered dose of $^{13}\text{C}$ recovered in breath per hour for whole goat's milk (WG). PDR/h = Percentage Dose of $^{13}\text{C}$ Recovered per hour.	73
5A	Mean relative plasma glucose concentration curves for four different test milks (CIF = Cow's milk infant formula, GIF=Goat's milk infant formula, WC=Whole cow's milk, WG=Whole goat's milk) consumed in a single meal by adult males after an 8-hour overnight fast.	84
5B	Combined plots of the $^{13}\text{C}$ excretion curves (?) and relative plasma glucose concentration (?) plots over a 240-minute collection period following ingestion of goat's milk infant formula (top) and cow's milk infant formula (bottom). The left y-axis is for the percentage of dose of $^{13}\text{C}$ recovered /hour (PDR/h) and the right y-axis is for the Relative Plasma Glucose (RPG) concentration in mmol/litre.	87
5C	Combined plots of the $^{13}\text{C}$ excretion curves (?) and relative plasma glucose concentration (?) plots (over a 240-minute collection period following ingestion of whole cow's milk (top) and whole goat's milk (bottom). The left y-axis is for the percentage of dose of $^{13}\text{C}$ recovered /hour (PDR/h) and the right y-axis is for the Relative Plasma Glucose (RPG) concentration in mmol/litre.	88
5D	Plasma glucose levels following the ingestion of milk in the present study (top) and in a similar study with whole milk and fermented milk (bottom) (Sanggaard <i>et al.</i> , 2004). The amount of milk fed in B was much higher than in A, yet the form of the curves up to 240 min is similar although glucose levels took longer to near baseline levels in B. Levels have an earlier peak in B and a lower subsequent drop to below baseline levels. This could be related to the amount of insulin that was released in response to the peak levels.	91