

Information Sheet for Participants

Introduction: We invite you to participate in our research project focused on the health benefits of bioactive compounds found in fresh produce, including fruits, vegetables, nuts, and mushrooms. This study aims to enhance public understanding of bioactives and their impact on health and well-being.

Sponsorship: This research project is jointly funded by Macquarie University and Hort Innovation, an industry body that invests in research and development projects to enhance the productivity, profitability, and sustainability of Australia's horticulture industry. Hort Innovation is a **not-for-profit, grower-owned organisation** that supports scientific research to improve knowledge about fresh produce, including its nutritional properties and potential health benefits. While Hort Innovation provides funding for this project, the research is conducted independently by Macquarie University. The findings will be used to develop educational materials and public health initiatives, with no commercial or promotional intent.

Purpose of the Study: The objective of this research is to:

- Find the best ways to articulate the known and scientifically-validated health benefits of bioactive compounds in fresh produce.
- Assess attitudes towards dietary choices related to bioactives.
- Develop effective communication strategies for disseminating information about the benefits of fresh produce bioactives.
- Discover how learning about bioactives in wholefoods has influenced your consumer choices.

What Participation Involves: As a participant in this study, you may be involved in structured activities such as:

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Workshops
- Focus groups

During these activities, you will be asked to share your insights, experiences, and feedback regarding fresh produce and bioactive compounds.

Duration of Participation: The duration of each activity may vary, and your total time commitment will depend on your availability, the number of sessions you choose to attend, and the specific type of session. We will provide you with projected timings and schedules well in advance to help you plan accordingly. Participation is entirely voluntary, and we hope that the insights you gain about fresh produce bioactives will be beneficial to you. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. If you feel comfortable, knowing your reasons for withdrawing might help to inform our research practices so that they remain inclusive and ethical as well as perhaps improving the ongoing design of our health communication campaign.

Use of Your Information and Privacy

The information you provide will be used only for this research project and will not be shared or reused in future studies. All findings will be reported in a way that does not identify any individuals. When we publish or present results, we will use aggregated and de-identified data. This means your

responses will be combined with others so that no one can be personally identified. We will never use your name, contact details, or any personal information in reports, publications, or presentations. Your data will be securely stored and destroyed within five years of the project's completion, following ethical research guidelines.

Potential Risks: While this study is low-risk, we acknowledge that discussing dietary choices can on occasion lead to discomfort. We encourage you to express any concerns or questions throughout the research process. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without any consequences.

Your Rights as a Participant:

- 1. Voluntary Participation:** Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study at any point without penalty.
- 2. Right to Ask Questions:** You have the right to ask questions about the research at any time. Your inquiries are valuable to us, as they help us understand what aspects are clear and helpful, as well as those that may be confusing. We encourage your questions, as they contribute to the overall quality and transparency of the research process.
- 3. Confidentiality:** Any personal information you provide will be kept confidential and will only be used for the current research purposes.
- 4. Anonymity in Reports:** Unless agreed otherwise, you will not be identified in any reports or publications resulting from this research. This ensures that all participants are treated with respect and their privacy is maintained.
- 5. Acknowledgement of Contributions:** In the spirit of collaborative research, we may invite you to indicate if you would like to be acknowledged for specific original contributions you make during the project. You have the right to request acknowledgement, and equally, you may choose to remain anonymous if you prefer. While we cannot guarantee that all contributions will be reported in publications or outreach efforts, we value your input and will strive to recognise original contributions appropriately when suitable.

Contact Information: If you have any questions or require further information about this study, please contact:

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Consent: By signing below, you indicate that you have read and understood the information provided in this document, and you agree to participate in the study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____