

经口腔唾液腺转运的硝酸盐循环对全身健康的重要作用

周建^{1,2,3}, 潘雯¹, 李晓钰¹, 王松灵^{1,3,4*}

1. 首都医科大学口腔健康北京实验室, 北京 100069;
2. 首都医科大学附属北京口腔医院特诊特需科, 北京 100050;
3. 首都医科大学附属北京天坛医院口腔和全身健康融合与转化研究实验室, 北京 100070;
4. 首都医科大学基础医学院, 北京 100069

* 联系人, E-mail: slwang@ccmu.edu.cn

2023-08-31 收稿, 2023-10-11 修回, 2023-10-12 接受, 2023-10-13 网络版发表

北京市政府项目(口腔健康北京实验室, PXM2021-014226-000041)、国家自然科学基金委员会-中国科学院学部前沿交叉研判项目(L2224038)、北京市科学技术委员会(Z181100001718208)、北京市教育委员会(119207020201)、国家自然科学基金(82030031, 81991504, 92149301, 82170951)、中国医学科学院医学与健康科技创新工程项目创新单元(2019-12M-5-031)、北京大数据精准医疗创新项目(PXM2021_014226_000026)、北京市政府“北京学者”项目(PXM2020_014226_000005, PXM2021_014226_000020)、北京口腔医院创新团队(CXTD202201)和北京市自然科学基金面上项目(7222079)资助

摘要 稳态是机体健康和疾病的交汇点. 保持良好的稳态是健康的必要条件, 恢复机体的稳态是扭转疾病状态的关键手段. 硝酸盐作为一种天然膳食营养素, 广泛存在于日常用水及食物中, 是生物体存活不可或缺的物质. 在病理状态下, 外源性补充的硝酸盐可通过硝酸盐-亚硝酸盐-NO途径, 作为内源性NO途径的补充, 对机体稳态的维持具有重要意义. 与此同时, Sialin和硝酸盐之间相互作用也会参与多种细胞稳态的调节进而对全身稳态作出贡献. 目前已证实, 外源性补充硝酸盐对机体多系统具有保护作用. 硝酸盐是维持机体稳态的重要体系, 具有良好的临床应用潜力. 本文主要综述了硝酸盐的发现历程及研究现状, 并阐明了其在未来应用中可能面临的严峻挑战和应对策略, 以期硝酸盐在机体稳态维持和疾病防治中的应用提供新的研究思路.

关键词 硝酸盐, 亚硝酸盐, 一氧化氮, Sialin, 唾液腺

稳态是一种生命体自我调节的动态平衡过程, 在不断变化的外部环境中, 生物体通过这一过程保持机体内环境的相对稳定, 以维持正常的生命活动, 保证机体各系统具有良好的生理功能. 同时, 机体通过稳态调节, 应对各种生理刺激及致病因素对机体的影响, 适应瞬息万变的外界环境, 从而更有利于生存^[1,2].

口腔健康是全身健康的基石之一. 口腔稳态与多种全身疾病的发生发展紧密相关, 是维持健康的前提和防治疾病的基础. 经口腔摄入的硝酸盐在胃肠道吸收收入血进入全身循环, 血液中的硝酸盐约25%经唾液

腺摄取转运至唾液, 使唾液中硝酸盐浓度保持为血液的10~20倍水平, 此现象引起了科学界的广泛关注. 随着近年来研究的发展, 经唾液腺转运的硝酸盐作为一氧化氮(NO)供体及通过硝酸盐转运通道(Sialin)介导的细胞生物学作用逐渐被发现, 硝酸盐对机体的有益作用被逐渐明确. 硝酸盐是维持机体稳态的重要体系, 使其具有很高的药用价值.

聚焦人们对硝酸盐的认知历程, 本文将硝酸盐作为极具希望的新一代药物的临床应用场景作详细的综述, 旨在帮助读者了解硝酸盐维护机体稳态的缘由及

引用格式: 周建, 潘雯, 李晓钰, 等. 经口腔唾液腺转运的硝酸盐循环对全身健康的重要作用. 科学通报, 2023, 68: 4726-4736
Zhou J, Pan W, Li X Y, et al. The important role of the inorganic nitrate cycle mediated by the oral salivary glands in systemic health (in Chinese). Chin Sci Bull, 2023, 68: 4726-4736, doi: 10.1360/TB-2023-0917

其应用场景,并为硝酸盐作为药物防治疾病的进一步研究提供参考依据。

1 硝酸盐概述

硝酸盐是离子化合物,一般为金属离子或铵根离子与硝酸根离子组成的盐类统称。常见的有硝酸钠、硝酸钾、硝酸铵、硝酸钙、硝酸铅、硝酸铈等。硝酸盐是陆生植物从土壤中获得的主要氮源,是维持植物生长不可或缺的物质。动物则直接或间接从食物链中进食植物合成的有机氮(蛋白质)或无机氮(硝酸盐),经分解后被自身机体利用。因此,硝酸盐广泛存在于人类饮用水与膳食中,尤其在绿叶蔬菜中含量最高。

1.1 我国传统医学中的硝酸盐

关于硝酸盐的医药应用,从可查考的文字记载来看,在我国已有2000多年的历史。硝石是我国传统医学中一味常用的由硝酸盐组成的中药,通常主要成分为硝酸钾,根据产地不同主要成分也可能是硝酸钠等,古称“消石”“火硝”“焰硝”“消金石”等。基于古代对硝石的医疗应用(表1),其功效可大致归纳为7类:止痛、解毒消肿、去腐生肌、化痰软坚散结、开窍辟秽、利湿退黄、温里活血,可用于内、外、妇、五官等多科疾病的治疗^[4]。

1.2 西药中的硝酸酯类药物

1867年,英国内科医生兰德·布莱顿(Lander Brunton)在*Lancet*上首次报道了亚硝酸异戊酯的抗心绞痛作用^[5]。直到1878年,威廉·默雷尔(William Murrell, 1853~1912)尝试将稀释后的硝酸甘油治疗心绞痛和降低血压。1879年,默雷尔^[6]在*Lancet*发表了一篇文章,阐述了应用硝酸甘油治疗心绞痛的方法。由此开始,硝酸

甘油开始广泛用于缓解心绞痛。但硝酸甘油也存在明显的不足,存在耐药性的问题,长期暴露会导致心绞痛和抗缺血作用完全消失或明显减弱。

1.3 硝酸盐、亚硝酸盐、亚硝胺与肿瘤

国际癌症研究机构(International Agency for Research on Cancer, IARC)曾经将硝酸盐/亚硝酸盐列入对机体具有2A类致癌风险的致癌物。但流行病学调查和动物实验结果显示,硝酸盐在体内非常稳定,少部分转化为亚硝酸盐,仅在极端条件下生成少量亚硝胺^[7]。目前研究认为,亚硝胺与胃肠道癌症显著相关,而无直接证据表明硝酸盐对机体具有致癌风险^[8]。

亚硝胺的分子结构通式为 $R_1(R_2)=N-N=O$, R_1 、 R_2 可为烷基、环烷基、芳香环或杂环。亚硝胺可分为挥发性及非挥发性,其中挥发性亚硝胺包括N-亚硝基二甲胺(N-nitrosodimethylamine, NDMA)、N-亚硝基二乙胺(N-nitrosodiethylamine, NDEA)、N-亚硝基二丁胺(N-nitrosodibutylamine, NDBA)、N-亚硝基哌啶(N-nitrosopiperidine, NPIP)、N-亚硝基吡咯烷(N-nitrosopyrrolidine, NPYR)及N-亚硝基吗啉(N-nitrosomorpholine, NMOR)等^[9]。IARC将含有大量亚硝酸盐及亚硝胺的加工肉类别为1类致癌物, NDEA及NDMA列为2A类致癌物, NPYR、NPIP和NDBA等列为2B类致癌物^[9,10]。

硝酸盐在机体内转化为亚硝胺需要极其严格的条件: (1) 硝酸盐向亚硝酸盐转化的总体百分比低,约为1%~9%^[11]; (2) 硝酸盐转化形成的亚硝酸盐与食物中的生物胺进入胃内存在一定时间差^[12]; (3) 胃液的正常pH约为1.8~2.0,进食后可升至约7.0,在0.5~2 h内胃液pH不适合亚硝胺合成^[13],即使餐后胃重新恢复低pH,此时亚硝酸盐的浓度也不支持亚硝胺的进一步合成; (4) 在消化过程中氨基酸基团受肽键的保护,而胃中的胃蛋

表1 我国古代文献记载硝石功效和用法的基本情况^[3]

Table 1 The efficacy and usage of inorganic nitrate recorded in ancient Chinese literature^[3]

功效	主治病证	用法
止痛	头痛、牙痛、身体其他部位疼痛	多以散粉涂于患处或鼻内、眼角等黏膜部位使用,或水煎口服
解毒消肿	喉痹、口疮、眼病	多以散粉涂于患处或鼻内、眼角等黏膜部位使用
去腐生肌	痈疡	多以汤剂、散粉或丹药等剂型局部使用
软坚散结	瘰疬、癭瘤	多以丸药口服或病灶局部使用
开窍辟秽	伏暑伤冷、神昏窍闭	多以丸散口服或以散粉涂于鼻内、眼角等黏膜部位
利湿退黄	黄疸、淋证	以汤剂或散剂口服
温里活血	阴寒实证、寒凝血瘀	以丸药或汤剂口服

白酶只破坏酪氨酸或苯丙氨酸肽键,因此胃内并无过多的游离氨基酸释放,亚硝酸胺合成底物受限^[14].

2 硝酸盐的来源与代谢循环

2.1 硝酸盐摄入的来源

机体获得硝酸盐主要依靠2种途径:内源性硝酸盐产生和外源性硝酸盐摄入^[15].

目前研究认为,哺乳动物内源性硝酸盐合成约占总量(硝酸盐空腹血浆浓度20~50000 nmol/L)的10%~20%^[16],其产生主要来自亚硝酸盐及NO的氧化.高浓度唾液硝酸盐被口腔细菌部分还原为亚硝酸盐及NO,硝酸盐和亚硝酸盐可经肠黏膜吸收入血,亚硝酸盐可被氧化为硝酸盐;此外,在L-精氨酸生成NO途径的过程中,非必需氨基酸L-精氨酸在NO合酶存在下被分子氧化为L-瓜氨酸和NO,形成的NO参与许多反应,其中硝酸盐和亚硝酸盐为反应中形成的副产物^[17,18].

饮食来源的硝酸盐占机体硝酸盐摄入的主导地位(表2)^[15].研究显示,22月龄的小鼠由于缺乏饮食摄入的硝酸钠会出现代谢综合征和血管内皮功能障碍^[19].硝酸盐摄入的其他主要来源包括饮用水(15%)和其他食品(5%)^[16].

2.2 机体中的硝酸盐代谢循环

硝酸盐摄入后经消化道吸收入循环系统,分布于全身.硝酸盐摄入后其表现分布体积为18~32 L,或0.24~0.44 L/kg bw(平均0.32 L/kg bw)^[20].硝酸盐摄入1 h后血浆中硝酸盐浓度达到峰值^[21].体内约25%的硝酸盐在唾液腺中重吸收后经唾液分泌于口腔,使唾液硝酸盐浓度可达到血液浓度的10~20倍^[22].通过小型猪腮腺萎缩模型,明确腮腺是机体硝酸盐转运的主要器官^[22],并基于唾液腺器官发现了细胞膜硝酸盐通道Sialin^[23].

高浓度唾液硝酸盐在口腔中被细菌部分还原为亚硝酸盐及NO.亚硝酸盐与剩余硝酸盐被吞入胃中,并在酸性环境中进一步转化为NO和其他具有生物活性的氮氧化物.当通过一氧化氮合酶(nitric oxide synthase, NOS)内源性产生NO受限时,亚硝酸盐可在某些生理条件下还原为NO或储存在血液和组织中^[24].

经口摄入的硝酸盐在体内半衰期为5~8 h,65%~75%经肾脏排泄^[18].亚硝酸盐的半衰期为1~5 min^[25],在体内约20~45 min^[20,26].硝酸盐在循环中具有较强的稳定性,且亚硝酸盐具有在含氧条件下可通过氧化代谢为硝酸盐或还原为NO的倾向(图1).

3 硝酸盐的作用机制

3.1 硝酸盐-亚硝酸盐-NO途径

人体可通过一氧化氮合酶内源性合成NO,当内源性NO合成受损时,可通过摄入外源性硝酸盐-亚硝酸盐-NO合成NO,维持NO稳态^[27].外源性硝酸盐在上消化道中被迅速吸收进入血液,其中约25%被唾液腺摄取并富集于唾液中,再次分泌进入口腔,称为肠-唾液循环^[28].唾液中的硝酸盐部分被口腔菌群中的硝酸盐还原酶还原为亚硝酸盐,随后通过吞咽经胃肠黏膜重新吸收入血,通过脱氧血红蛋白、脱氧肌红蛋白、黄嘌呤氧化酶、细胞色素P-450、醛氧化酶和维生素C等途径还原为NO,这一过程称为硝酸盐-亚硝酸盐-NO途径^[29,30],NO及其衍生物可在稳态平衡中发挥重要作用(图2).

3.2 硝酸盐-Sialin反馈调节

Sialin是哺乳动物细胞膜的硝酸盐转运通道,也存在于细胞质中,是硝酸盐发挥生理功能及维持NO稳态的关键蛋白^[23].机体血液中硝酸盐浓度升高通常伴有重要脏器Sialin表达升高,进而引起一系列细胞生物学

表2 以硝酸盐含量为依据的蔬菜分类

Table 2 Classification of vegetables based on inorganic nitrate content

硝酸盐含量(mg/kg 鲜重)	蔬菜品种
非常低(<200)	洋葱、芦笋、蚕豆、茄子、大蒜、洋葱、绿豆、蘑菇、豌豆、胡椒、土豆、西葫芦、红薯、番茄、西瓜
低(200~500)	西兰花、胡萝卜、花椰菜、黄瓜、南瓜、菊苣
中(500~1000)	卷心菜、莴苣、萝卜、菜花
高(1000~2500)	块根芹、大白菜、菊苣、茴香、大头菜、韭菜、欧芹
非常高(>2500)	芹菜、水芹、山萝卜、生菜、红甜菜根、菠菜、芝麻菜

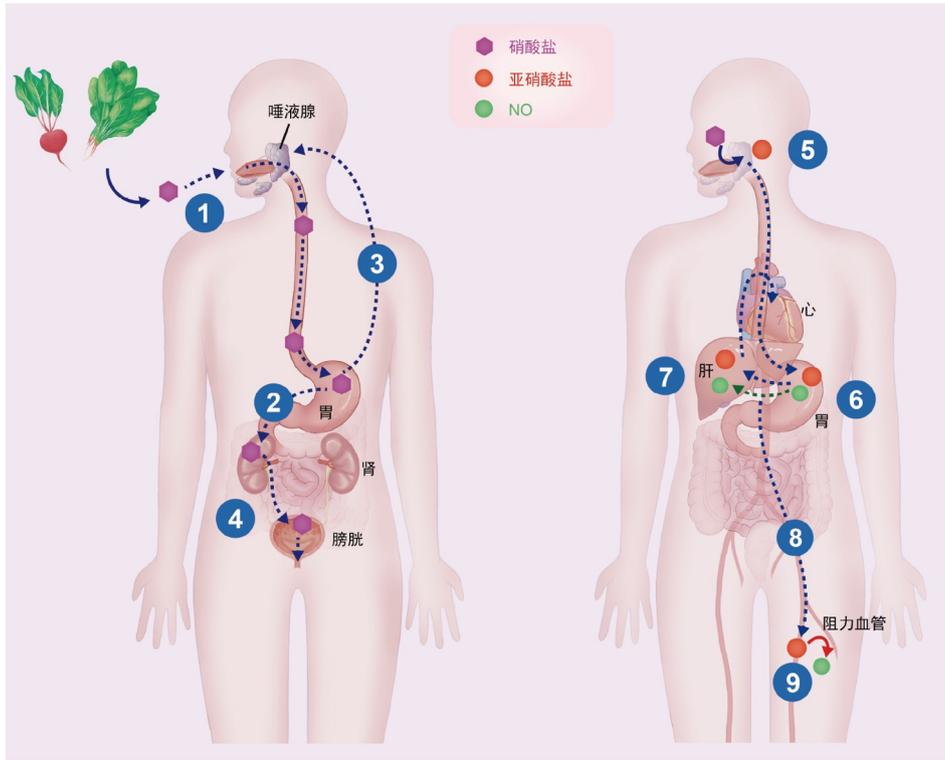


图 1 (网络版彩色) 机体中的硝酸盐代谢循环。① 从饮食中摄取硝酸盐; ② 硝酸盐被胃和小肠吸收; ③ 硝酸盐在唾液中被浓缩; ④ 硝酸盐经肾排泄; ⑤ 硝酸盐被口腔内细菌还原为亚硝酸盐; ⑥ 亚硝酸盐还原为NO; ⑦ 亚硝酸盐和NO扩散进入门脉系统, NO被氧化为亚硝酸盐; ⑧ 亚硝酸盐在动脉循环中运输; ⑨ 亚硝酸盐在阻力血管中还原为NO, 舒张血管降低血压

Figure 1 (Color online) The cycle of inorganic nitrate metabolism in the body. ① Ingestion of inorganic nitrate; ② inorganic nitrate is absorbed by the stomach and small intestine; ③ inorganic nitrate is concentrated in the saliva; ④ renal excretion of inorganic nitrate; ⑤ inorganic nitrate is reduced to nitrite by oral bacteria; ⑥ reduction of nitrite to NO; ⑦ nitrite and NO diffused into the portal system, and NO is oxidised to nitrite; ⑧ nitrite is transported via arterial circulation; ⑨ nitrite is reduced to NO in the resistance vessels, and vasodilation reduces blood pressure

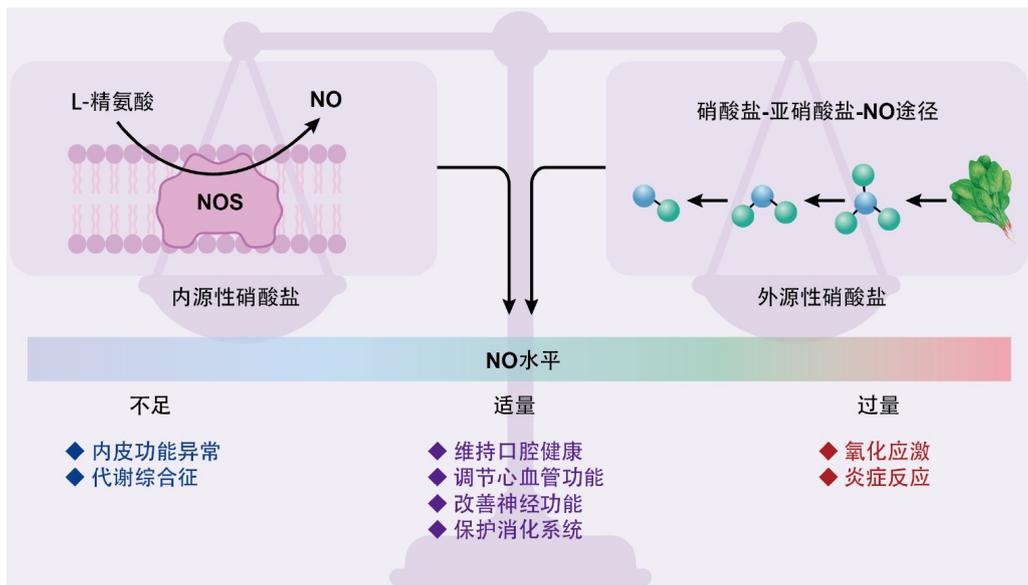


图 2 (网络版彩色) 膳食硝酸盐调节NO稳态促进全身稳态

Figure 2 (Color online) Dietary inorganic nitrate regulates NO homeostasis to promote whole-body homeostasis

变化^[31]。一方面, Sialin在人类唾液腺中高表达, 因此唾液腺功能是影响硝酸盐生理功能的重要因素之一^[23]; 另一方面, 硝酸盐还可以反过来调控唾液腺功能。研究发现, 在小型猪唾液腺放射损伤模型中, 硝酸盐可增加唾液腺腺泡细胞中Sialin的表达, Sialin进一步转运更多的硝酸盐进入细胞, 从而激活EGFR-AKT-MAPK信号通路, 促进唾液腺腺泡细胞增殖, 抑制凋亡减轻放射损伤^[31](图3)。硝酸盐与Sialin相互作用形成的硝酸盐-Sialin反馈环路(nitrate-Sialin feedback loop), 有利于对机体的稳态进行调节。笔者最新的研究发现, 硝酸盐-Sialin反馈环路也可介导一系列细胞生物学功能, 包括提升线粒体功能、调控线粒体自噬等。硝酸盐-Sialin反馈环路介导的细胞生物学作用是未来研究稳态调节的重要方向。

4 硝酸盐维护机体稳态

硝酸盐通过NO及Sialin在维持机体稳态方面起重要作用(图4), 包括调节血管张力、抗氧化、提高肌肉运动能力、保护消化系统、抑制炎症因子释放、调节糖代谢、调节肠道菌群等^[32]。

4.1 消化系统

饮食来源的硝酸盐经口腔摄入后, 由消化道吸收进入循环系统。胃肠道是硝酸盐作用的直接靶器官, 胃

肠保护也是硝酸盐维持机体稳态的最早证据之一。“高空蹦极”^[33]及“束缚浸水”^[34]应激模型证实, 在应激状态下, 唾液腺主动转运并分泌硝酸盐形成高浓度唾液硝酸盐, 随吞咽到胃肠道, 通过硝酸盐-NO途径, 增加胃肠血流, 增厚胃黏液层, 减少胃肠溃疡、糜烂、出血、穿孔等, 达到保护胃黏膜免受应激损伤的作用^[33,34]。

肠道菌群是肠道屏障的重要组成部分。诱导炎症性肠病模型小鼠发现, 补充硝酸盐可以下调肠道上皮内IL-17以及MMP2的表达, 降低炎症水平, 也可以降低多种致病菌(Bacteroidales_S24-7_group_unidentified、拟杆菌和Prevotellaceae_UCG-001等)丰度, 上调乳酸杆菌、瘤胃球菌科、普雷沃菌等有益菌^[35]丰度, 减轻肠道上皮凋亡、缓解炎症性肠病症状^[35]。

小鼠非酒精性脂肪性肝病模型研究发现, 口服硝酸盐可以阻止非酒精性脂肪性肝病的发展, 硝酸盐主要通过Sialin蛋白调控CtsI-Nrf2通路, 从而调节肝内骨髓源性巨噬细胞发挥免疫调节的作用。硝酸盐也可以有效防治酒精性脂肪性肝病, 通过调控肝脏脂质代谢显著缓解肝脏炎症浸润及脂肪变性程度。此外, 膳食硝酸盐/亚硝酸盐对机体胰腺代谢功能具有重要意义^[19]。

4.2 心血管系统

自1986年发现内源性NO的产生及其对于血管松弛的生理作用以来, 硝酸酯类药物广泛应用于冠心

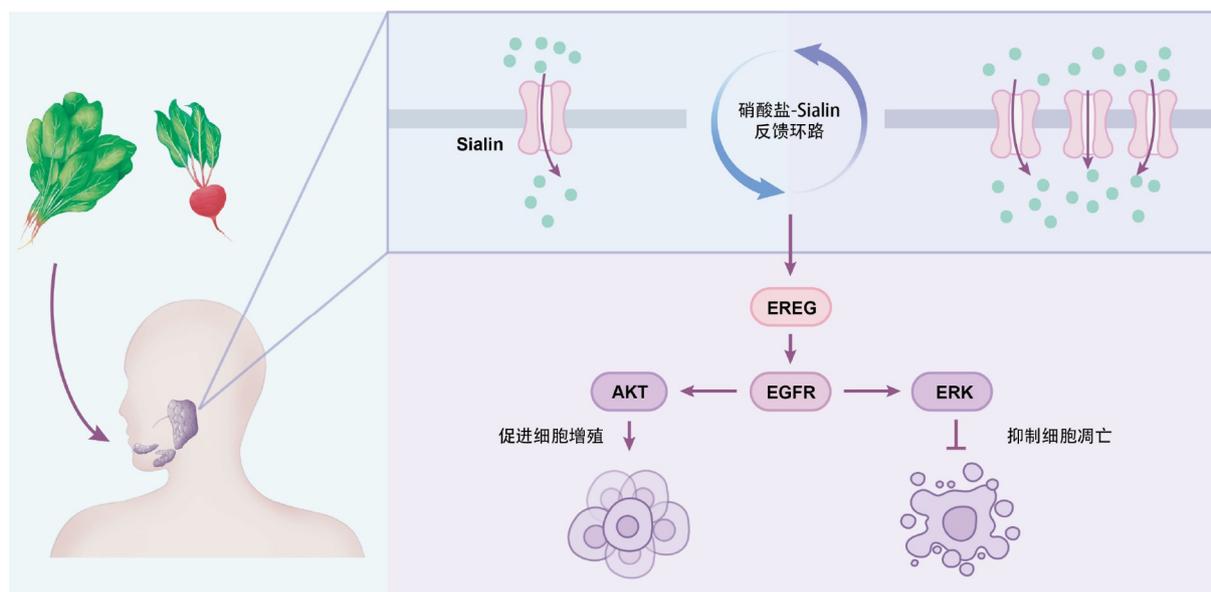


图3 (网络版彩色)硝酸盐-Sialin反馈环路防治唾液腺放射损伤模式图
Figure 3 (Color online) Prevention of salivary gland radiation injury by the inorganic nitrate-sialin feedback loop

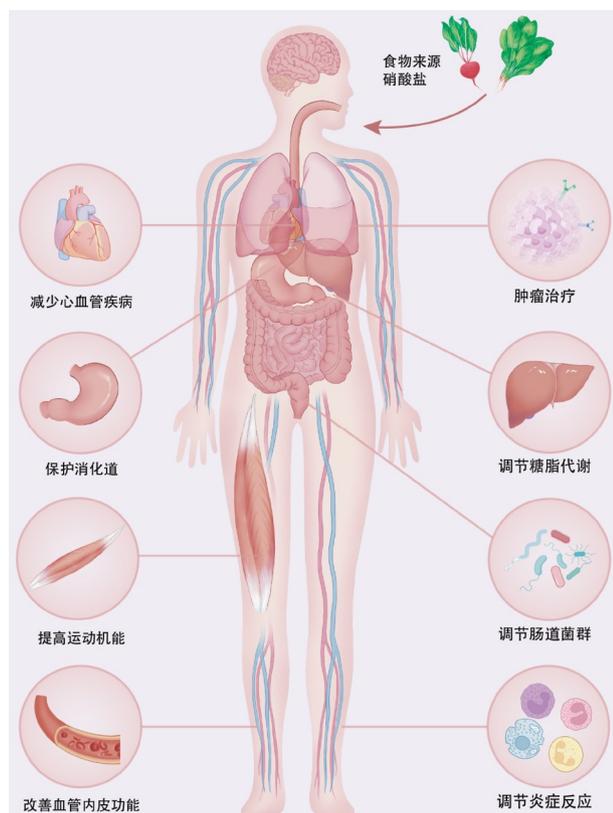


图4 (网络版彩色) 硝酸盐的主要生理功能

Figure 4 (Color online) Primary physiological functions of inorganic nitrate

病、心力衰竭、高血压等疾病的治疗^[36]。但NO作为信使分子,作用时间短、溶解性强,因此更多的研究将目光转向了调节NO生成的上游物质。

富含硝酸盐的食物在高血压模型中表现出有益的生理效应。健康受试者饮用富含硝酸盐的甜菜根汁3 h后可发现血压显著降低^[21],高血压患者在服用富含硝酸盐的甜菜根汁后,血压值也可出现显著降低^[37],说明饮食补充硝酸盐可以安全、有效地降低血压。

动物研究结果显示,硝酸盐和亚硝酸盐对心脏缺血再灌注损伤模型具有减少梗塞面积、保护神经和心脏功能等作用^[38-41]。硝酸盐可以作为一种前体药物,促进血液和组织中亚硝酸盐含量增加、时效延长。硝酸盐-亚硝酸盐-NO途径不仅产生NO,还产生其他活性氮物种(reactive nitrogen species, RNS),能够亚硝基化(-SNO)和硝基化(-NO₂)蛋白,从而改变机体功能。

此外,已有研究证实,在内皮功能障碍和轻度高胆固醇血症患者中,硝酸盐可减少血小板p-选择素表达和白细胞-血小板聚集,这有助于减少血栓形成^[42]。

4.3 放射防护

头颈部恶性肿瘤是世界十大肿瘤之一^[43],放射治疗是其主要治疗手段之一^[44]。唾液腺在头颈部解剖区域内,会不可避免地受到照射出现放射损伤(irradiation damage),表现为放射性口干(irradiation induced xerostomia)^[45]。临床上目前对放射线口干常用人工唾液、毛果芸香碱等来缓解症状,但效果有限,暂无有效方法治疗放射性口干。在与人最为相近的小型猪动物模型上,发现外源性口服补充不同剂量的硝酸盐可以预防唾液腺放射损伤,并呈现出显著的剂量依赖性。机制研究发现,硝酸盐与Sialin相互作用形成的硝酸盐-Sialin反馈环路可激活EGFR-AKT-MAPK信号通路,促进细胞增殖,抑制凋亡,最终维持腺体的自我更新能力和稳态。

4.4 肿瘤防治

国际癌症研究机构在2010年将硝酸盐/亚硝酸盐列入对机体具有2A类致癌风险的致癌物,但流行病学调查和动物实验结果显示,目前尚无明确的直接证据表明硝酸盐对人体具有致癌风险^[8]。但部分研究发现,膳食亚硝酸盐,尤其是动物来源的亚硝酸盐,与胃肠道肿瘤呈正相关性,如同时摄入维生素C可显著降低癌症发病的风险;此外也有研究报道膳食亚硝酸盐与胃肠道癌症未见显著相关性(表3)。

笔者研究团队诱导小鼠结肠癌模型,通过在饮水中预防性添加硝酸盐,发现硝酸盐能够显著降低结肠肿瘤的发生及其发展。初步机制研究认为,这一作用可能与硝酸盐通过调控中性粒细胞等髓系淋巴细胞作用于小鼠结肠肿瘤中免疫微环境有关。利用小鼠肠道类器官模型,发现硝酸盐能够维持类器官生长,并能够阻滞肿瘤的增殖。同时,硝酸盐会上调细胞焦亡、铁死亡、氧化应激水平及PD1等免疫治疗检查点表达水平,说明硝酸盐同时有增强肿瘤治疗效果的潜在功能。

4.5 神经系统

神经系统疾病保护是硝酸盐对人体稳态调控重要的一部分。在神经组织中,尤其是缺血缺氧状态下,硝酸盐-亚硝酸盐-NO途径大大增强,作为一氧化氮合酶的重要替代途径保障了氧依赖的NOS酶活性受损情况下NO的产生^[52]。硝酸盐/亚硝酸盐和NO在缺血性疾病中的机制可能与线粒体呼吸链、氧化应激有关^[53]。有学者设计并合成了美金刚胺硝酸盐^[54],在血管闭塞大

表3 亚硝酸盐与胃肠道肿瘤相关性临床研究

Table 3 Clinical studies on the association between nitrite and gastrointestinal tumours

年份	研究类型	国家	样本量	研究结果
1990年 ^[46]	病例对照研究	意大利	胃癌组: 1016例 对照组: 1159例	随着亚硝酸盐和蛋白质摄入量的增加, 胃癌发病风险显著增加, 而随着抗坏血酸、 β -胡萝卜素、 α -生育酚和植物脂肪摄入量的增加, 胃癌发病风险降低
1999年 ^[47]	队列研究	芬兰	9985例	膳食亚硝酸盐摄入量与结直肠癌的发生率无显著相关性, 而亚硝酸盐摄入量与风险增加显著相关
2001年 ^[48]	病例对照研究	美国	352例非贲门胃癌, 225例贲门胃癌, 206例食管鳞状细胞癌和282例食管腺癌	亚硝酸盐摄入量增高与非贲门性胃癌风险增加显著相关, 补充维生素C与非贲门性胃癌风险显著降低相关
2011年 ^[49]	队列研究	美国	303156例	红肉摄入量与食管鳞状细胞癌呈正相关; 亚硝酸盐摄入量与胃肠道癌症无明显相关
2012年 ^[49]	病例对照研究	美国	494979总数, 215例食管鳞状细胞癌, 630例食管腺癌, 454例胃贲门腺癌和501例胃非贲门腺癌	亚硝酸盐与食管癌或胃癌无关
2014年 ^[50]	队列研究	中国	73118例	亚硝酸盐总体摄入与大肠癌风险无显著相关性
2021年 ^[51]	队列研究	美国	98030例女性	加工肉类中摄取亚硝酸盐与胃癌风险增加相关; 膳食亚硝酸盐与胆囊癌呈负相关, 动物来源亚硝酸盐与小肠癌呈负相关

鼠模型中, 通过抑制ERK通路和同时激活PI3K/Akt通路, 发挥神经保护作用和改善脑血流减轻空间记忆的损伤和运动功能障碍。以上证据均提示硝酸盐与美金刚的联用或许可以对神经退行性疾病的防治有着进一步的意义。此外, 脑组织中Sialin转运体表达含量较高, 仅次于唾液腺, 提示硝酸盐在脑中的作用可能与Sialin有关^[55]。硝酸盐代谢对于脑血管疾病及神经退行性疾病都有一定的影响。

4.6 代谢系统及衰老防护

随着生物体的衰老, 新陈代谢逐渐趋缓, 骨质疏松、肥胖等代谢类疾病与衰老伴随发生。代谢疾病和衰老的发生与体内多种信号分子异常密切相关, NO作为机体内重要的信号分子, 不仅在糖代谢、脂代谢以及能量代谢中发挥重要作用, 还在衰老防护中扮演重要角色。硝酸盐-亚硝酸盐-NO途径作为内源性NO途径的补充, 对稳态的维持具有重要意义。外源性补充硝酸盐可以有效预防骨质疏松、肥胖以及减缓衰老, 在预防代谢疾病以及衰老防护中发挥重要作用。

动物研究显示, 在内皮型NOS缺乏导致NO合成受损的小鼠中, 硝酸盐可降低小鼠体脂并改善其葡萄糖稳态^[56]。此外, 通过激活NO途径和调节肠道微生物群, 无机硝酸盐还可以减轻高脂饮食诱导的小鼠肥胖, 并改善糖脂代谢紊乱^[57]。流行病学研究表明, 食用富含膳食硝酸盐的绿叶蔬菜可降低患2型糖尿病的风险^[58], 而习惯使用漱口水干扰硝酸盐向亚硝酸盐的转化可能导

致超重成年人的血糖代谢紊乱^[59]。

此外, 有研究表明, 每日摄入硝酸盐(0.5 mmol/L)可恢复D-半乳糖诱导的衰老小鼠和自然衰老小鼠肝组织内硝酸盐水平, 降低谷丙转氨酶和天门冬氨酸氨基转移酶水平, 预防衰老相关肝变性及糖脂代谢的退化。这些证据说明硝酸盐具有缓解衰老导致的肝脏退行性变及肝脏细胞凋亡的作用^[60]。

5 总结与展望

经口腔摄入的硝酸盐在胃肠道吸收入血进入全身循环, 进而在多种系统及器官发挥有益作用已得到广泛证实。作为一种广泛存在于自然界的生物活性物质, 硝酸盐与生物体的生命活动密不可分。其通过NO及Sialin在细胞再生、细胞代谢、免疫调节和防治疾病中发挥着重要作用, 是维持机体稳态的重要成分。

目前, 硝酸盐作为一种天然膳食营养素已被添加至功能饮料中, 用以调节人体机能。如何将硝酸盐应用于临床, 进行人类慢病防治, 是需要重点关注的问题。硝酸盐在人体内半衰期短、生物利用度低、难以维持有效的血药浓度是阻碍硝酸盐临床应用的瓶颈。笔者团队目前进一步开发了硝酸盐的纳米复合制剂——耐瑞特, 并验证了其长效性^[61]。在未来, 对耐瑞特进行安全性评价是药物研发的必需组成部分。

随着对硝酸盐新型制剂在机体稳态维持作用研究的不断深入, 作为从口腔走向全身使者的硝酸盐有望更好地造福人类。

参考文献

- 1 López-Otín C, Kroemer G. Hallmarks of health. *Cell*, 2021, 184: 33–63
- 2 Qin L Z, Zhou J, Hu L, et al. Homeostatic medicine: New strategy and concept of health maintenance as well as diagnosis and treatment of diseases (in Chinese). *Chin J Stomatol*, 2023, 58: 109–117 [秦力铮, 周建, 胡磊, 等. 稳态医学——维持机体健康和诊治疾病的新概念新策略. *中华口腔医学杂志*, 2023, 58: 109–117]
- 3 Chi L, Wang J B, Chen T, et al. Research on the efficacy of saltpeter in ancient medical books (in Chinese). *Modern Chin Med*, 2022, 24: 2483–2488 [迟莉, 王伽伯, 陈婷, 等. 古代医籍中硝石功效考证. *中国现代中药*, 2022, 24: 2483–2488]
- 4 Wei L Y, Chen T, Sun C, et al. Herbal research on the name and properties of saltpeter (in Chinese). *J Chin Med Mater*, 2022, 45: 2768–2774 [韦良玉, 陈婷, 孙超, 等. 硝石名实与药性的本草考证. *中药材*, 2022, 45: 2768–2774]
- 5 Schwartz A M. The cause, relief and prevention of headaches arising from contact with dynamite. *N Engl J Med*, 1946, 235: 541–544
- 6 Divakaran S, Loscalzo J. The role of nitroglycerin and other nitrogen oxides in cardiovascular therapeutics. *J Am Coll Cardiol*, 2017, 70: 2393–2410
- 7 Mirvish S S. Formation of N-nitroso compounds: Chemistry, kinetics, and *in vivo* occurrence. *Toxicol Appl Pharmacol*, 1975, 31: 325–351
- 8 IARC Working Group on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans. Ingested nitrate and nitrite, and cyanobacterial peptide toxins. IARC Monogr Eval Carcinog Risks Hum, 2010, 94: v–vii, 1–412
- 9 Gushgari A J, Halden R U. Critical review of major sources of human exposure to N-nitrosamines. *Chemosphere*, 2018, 210: 1124–1136
- 10 IARC Working Group on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans. Red Meat and Processed Meat, 2018. <https://publications.iarc.fr/564>
- 11 Mortensen A, Aguilar F, Crebelli R, et al. Re-evaluation of sodium nitrate (E 251) and potassium nitrate (E 252) as food additives. *EFS2*, 2017, doi: [10.2903/j.efsa.2017.4787](https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2017.4787)
- 12 Govoni M, Jansson E Å, Weitzberg E, et al. The increase in plasma nitrite after a dietary nitrate load is markedly attenuated by an antibacterial mouthwash. *Nitric Oxide*, 2008, 19: 333–337
- 13 Cai L F, Li N, Du S, et al. Research progress on the hazards of N-nitroso compounds and their synthesis and inhibition *in vivo* and *in vitro* (in Chinese). *Food Sci*, 2016, 37: 271–277 [蔡鲁峰, 李娜, 杜莎, 等. N-亚硝基化合物的危害及其在体内外合成和抑制的研究进展. *食品科学*, 2016, 37: 271–277]
- 14 McKnight G M, Duncan C W, Leifert C, et al. Dietary nitrate in man: Friend or foe? *Br J Nutr*, 1999, 81: 349–358
- 15 Weitzberg E, Lundberg J O. Novel aspects of dietary nitrate and human health. *Annu Rev Nutr*, 2013, 33: 129–159
- 16 Hord N G, Tang Y, Bryan N S. Food sources of nitrates and nitrites: The physiologic context for potential health benefits. *Am J Clin Nutr*, 2009, 90: 1–10
- 17 Leaf C D, Wishnok J S, Tannenbaum S R. L-Arginine is a precursor for nitrate biosynthesis in humans. *Biochem Biophys Res Commun*, 1989, 163: 1032–1037
- 18 Merino L, Örnemark U, Toldrá F. Analysis of nitrite and nitrate in foods: Overview of chemical, regulatory and analytical aspects. *Adv Food Nutr Res*, 2017, 81: 65–107
- 19 Kina-Tanada M, Sakanashi M, Tanimoto A, et al. Long-term dietary nitrite and nitrate deficiency causes the metabolic syndrome, endothelial dysfunction and cardiovascular death in mice. *Diabetologia*, 2017, 60: 1138–1151
- 20 Dejam A, Hunter C J, Tremonti C, et al. Nitrite infusion in humans and nonhuman primates. *Circulation*, 2007, 116: 1821–1831
- 21 Webb A J, Patel N, Loukogeorgakis S, et al. Acute blood pressure lowering, vasoprotective, and antiplatelet properties of dietary nitrate via bioconversion to nitrite. *Hypertension*, 2008, 51: 784–790
- 22 Xia D S, Deng D J, Wang S L. Destruction of parotid glands affects nitrate and nitrite metabolism. *J Dent Res*, 2003, 82: 101–105
- 23 Qin L, Liu X, Sun Q, et al. Sialin (*SLC17A5*) functions as a nitrate transporter in the plasma membrane. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*, 2012, 109: 13434–13439
- 24 Burleigh M C, Liddle L, Monaghan C, et al. Salivary nitrite production is elevated in individuals with a higher abundance of oral nitrate-reducing bacteria. *Free Radical Biol Med*, 2018, 120: 80–88
- 25 Lundberg J O, Govoni M. Inorganic nitrate is a possible source for systemic generation of nitric oxide. *Free Radical Biol Med*, 2004, 37: 395–400
- 26 Hunault C C, van Velzen A G, Sips A J A M, et al. Bioavailability of sodium nitrite from an aqueous solution in healthy adults. *Toxicol Lett*, 2009, 190: 48–53
- 27 Kapil V, Khambata R S, Jones D A, et al. The noncanonical pathway for *in vivo* nitric oxide generation: The nitrate-nitrite-nitric oxide pathway. *Pharmacol Rev*, 2020, 72: 692–766
- 28 Duncan C, Dougall H, Johnston P, et al. Chemical generation of nitric oxide in the mouth from the enterosalivary circulation of dietary nitrate. *Nat Med*, 1995, 1: 546–551
- 29 Jones A M, Thompson C, Wylie L J, et al. Dietary nitrate and physical performance. *Annu Rev Nutr*, 2018, 38: 303–328

- 30 Lundberg J O, Carlström M, Weitzberg E. Metabolic effects of dietary nitrate in health and disease. *Cell Metab*, 2018, 28: 9–22
- 31 Feng X, Wu Z, Xu J, et al. Dietary nitrate supplementation prevents radiotherapy-induced xerostomia. *eLife*, 2021, 10: e70710
- 32 Qin L Z, Jin L Y, Qu X M, et al. Nitrate: A pioneer from the mouth to the systemic health and diseases (in Chinese). *Chin J Stomatol*, 2020, 55: 433–438 [秦力铮, 靳路远, 曲兴民, 等. 硝酸盐—从口腔走向全身的使者. *中华口腔医学杂志*, 2020, 55: 433–438]
- 33 Jin L, Qin L, Xia D, et al. Active secretion and protective effect of salivary nitrate against stress in human volunteers and rats. *Free Radical Biol Med*, 2013, 57: 61–67
- 34 Miyoshi M, Kasahara E, Park A M, et al. Dietary nitrate inhibits stress-induced gastric mucosal injury in the rat. *Free Radical Res*, 2003, 37: 85–90
- 35 Hu L, Jin L, Xia D, et al. Nitrate ameliorates dextran sodium sulfate-induced colitis by regulating the homeostasis of the intestinal microbiota. *Free Radical Biol Med*, 2020, 152: 609–621
- 36 O'Donnell V B, Eiserich J P, Chumley P H, et al. Nitration of unsaturated fatty acids by nitric oxide-derived reactive nitrogen species peroxynitrite, nitrous acid, nitrogen dioxide, and nitronium ion. *Chem Res Toxicol*, 1999, 12: 83–92
- 37 Kapil V, Khambata R S, Robertson A, et al. Dietary nitrate provides sustained blood pressure lowering in hypertensive patients. *Hypertension*, 2015, 65: 320–327
- 38 Webb A, Bond R, McLean P, et al. Reduction of nitrite to nitric oxide during ischemia protects against myocardial ischemia–reperfusion damage. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*, 2004, 101: 13683–13688
- 39 Duranski M R, Greer J J M, Dejam A, et al. Cytoprotective effects of nitrite during *in vivo* ischemia-reperfusion of the heart and liver. *J Clin Invest*, 2005, 115: 1232–1240
- 40 Omar S A, Webb A J, Lundberg J O, et al. Therapeutic effects of inorganic nitrate and nitrite in cardiovascular and metabolic diseases. *J Intern Med*, 2016, 279: 315–336
- 41 Dezfulian C, Raat N, Shiva S, et al. Role of the anion nitrite in ischemia-reperfusion cytoprotection and therapeutics. *Cardiovasc Res*, 2007, 75: 327–338
- 42 Velmurugan S, Gan J M, Rathod K S, et al. Dietary nitrate improves vascular function in patients with hypercholesterolemia: A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study. *Am J Clin Nutr*, 2016, 103: 25–38
- 43 Sung H, Ferlay J, Siegel R L, et al. Global cancer statistics 2020: GLOBOCAN estimates of incidence and mortality worldwide for 36 cancers in 185 countries. *CA Cancer J Clin*, 2021, 71: 209–249
- 44 Vissink A, Mitchell J B, Baum B J, et al. Clinical management of salivary gland hypofunction and xerostomia in head-and-neck cancer patients: Successes and barriers. *Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys*, 2010, 78: 983–991
- 45 Kielbassa A M, Hinkelbein W, Hellwig E, et al. Radiation-related damage to dentition. *Lancet Oncol*, 2006, 7: 326–335
- 46 Buiatti E, Palli D, Decarli A, et al. A case-control study of gastric cancer and diet in Italy: II. Association with nutrients. *Int J Cancer*, 1990, 45: 896–901
- 47 Knekt P, Jrvinen R, Dich J, et al. Risk of colorectal and other gastro-intestinal cancers after exposure to nitrate, nitrite and N-nitroso compounds: A follow-up study. *Int J Cancer*, 1999, 80: 852–856
- 48 Mayne S T, Risch H A, Dubrow R, et al. Nutrient intake and risk of subtypes of esophageal and gastric cancer. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev*, 2001, 10: 1055–1062
- 49 Cross A J, Freedman N D, Ren J, et al. Meat Consumption and risk of esophageal and gastric cancer in a large prospective study. *Am J Gastroenterol*, 2011, 106: 432–442
- 50 DellaValle C T, Xiao Q, Yang G, et al. Dietary nitrate and nitrite intake and risk of colorectal cancer in the Shanghai Women's Health Study. *Int J Cancer*, 2014, 134: 2917–2926
- 51 Buller I D, Patel D M, Weyer P J, et al. Ingestion of nitrate and nitrite and risk of stomach and other digestive system cancers in the Iowa women's health study. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*, 2021, 18: 6822
- 52 Jansson E Å, Huang L, Malkey R, et al. A mammalian functional nitrate reductase that regulates nitrite and nitric oxide homeostasis. *Nat Chem Biol*, 2008, 4: 411–417
- 53 Shiva S, Sack M N, Greer J J, et al. Nitrite augments tolerance to ischemia/reperfusion injury via the modulation of mitochondrial electron transfer. *J Exp Med*, 2007, 204: 2089–2102
- 54 Kennedy M A. A brief review of the basics of immunology: The innate and adaptive response. *Vet Clin N Am-Small Anim Pract*, 2010, 40: 369–379
- 55 Feng Y, Cao X, Zhao B, et al. Nitrate increases cisplatin chemosensitivity of oral squamous cell carcinoma via REDD1/AKT signaling pathway. *Sci China Life Sci*, 2021, 64: 1814–1828
- 56 Carlström M, Larsen F J, Nyström T, et al. Dietary inorganic nitrate reverses features of metabolic syndrome in endothelial nitric oxide synthase-deficient mice. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*, 2010, 107: 17716–17720
- 57 Ma L, Hu L, Jin L, et al. Rebalancing glucolipid metabolism and gut microbiome dysbiosis by nitrate-dependent alleviation of high-fat diet-induced

- obesity. *BMJ Open Diab Res Care*, 2020, 8: e001255
- 58 Carter P, Gray L J, Troughton J, et al. Fruit and vegetable intake and incidence of type 2 diabetes mellitus: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Br Med J*, 2010, 341: c4229
- 59 Joshipura K J, Muñoz-Torres F J, Morou-Bermudez E, et al. Over-the-counter mouthwash use and risk of pre-diabetes/diabetes. *Nitric Oxide*, 2017, 71: 14–20
- 60 Wang H, Hu L, Li L, et al. Inorganic nitrate alleviates the senescence-related decline in liver function. *Sci China Life Sci*, 2018, 61: 24–34
- 61 Pan W, Hu G, Li S, et al. Nanonitrator: Novel enhancer of inorganic nitrate's protective effects, predicated on swarm learning approach. *Sci Bull*, 2023, 68: 838–850

Summary for “经口腔唾液腺转运的硝酸盐循环对全身健康的重要作用”

The important role of the inorganic nitrate cycle mediated by the oral salivary glands in systemic health

Jian Zhou^{1,2,3}, Wen Pan¹, Xiaoyu Li¹ & Songlin Wang^{1,3,4*}

¹ Beijing Laboratory of Oral Health, Capital Medical University, Beijing 100069, China;

² Department of VIP Dental Service, Beijing Stomatological Hospital, Capital Medical University, Beijing 100050, China;

³ Laboratory for Oral and General Health Integration and Translation, Beijing Tiantan Hospital, Capital Medical University, Beijing 100070, China;

⁴ School of Basic Medical Sciences, Capital Medical University, Beijing 100069, China

* Corresponding author, E-mail: slwang@ccmu.edu.cn

Homeostasis represents a dynamic equilibrium process of self-regulation employed by living organisms, which sustains the relative stability of the internal environment of an organism, thus allowing for the continuation of normal physiological functions under ever-changing external conditions. Through homeostatic regulation, organisms adapt to various physiological stimuli and combat pathogenic factors, thereby enhancing their chances of survival. When the delicate balance of homeostasis is disrupted, a cascade of abnormal changes occurs, manifesting as physical symptoms and behavioural abnormalities, commonly recognised as disease symptoms. Homeostatic medicine, rooted in the maintenance of homeostatic balance, includes a systematic investigation into the laws and mechanisms underlying homeostatic regulation at multiple levels, from the molecular and cellular environments to the organ, whole-body, and external environments. This comprehensive approach aims to promote human health, as well as prevent and treat diseases. Inorganic nitrate is widely present in everyday water and food sources and is essential for the survival of organisms. Its historical significance in various aspects of human life, including diet, medicine, and industry, spans over 2000 years in the records of our country. In recent years, extensive research has been conducted to explore the biological activities of nitrate as a natural dietary nutrient. Within the human body, inorganic nitrate undergoes partial reduction to nitrite and nitric oxide due to the action of oral bacteria in saliva. Nitrite is subsequently absorbed into the bloodstream via the intestinal mucosa, where it further reduces to nitric oxide—a process known as the nitrate-nitrite-NO pathway. This pathway plays a pivotal role in regulating bodily nitric oxide levels, and thus, maintaining overall homeostasis. In addition, sialin is a mammalian membrane nitrate transporter, facilitating the transportation of nitrate to salivary glands, where it is secreted into the oral cavity via saliva. The upregulation of sialin expression enhances nitrate influx into cells, establishing a positive nitrate-sialin feedback loop that protects salivary glands and other organs. Recent studies have revealed the involvement of sialin in various biological functions, further emphasising its significance in homeostatic regulation. Exogenous nitrate supplementation has demonstrated various beneficial effects on the body, including the regulation of vascular tone, antioxidant properties, improvement of muscle performance, gastrointestinal protection, inhibition of inflammatory factor release, modulation of glucose metabolism, and regulation of intestinal flora. The nitrate-sialin system, as a crucial component in maintaining whole-body homeostasis, holds significant promise. As awareness of the advantages of inorganic nitrate for human health deepens, nutritional supplements containing nitrate as the primary ingredient have become increasingly integrated into people's lives, with their positive effects reported by an increasing number of clinical studies. The effective use and safe management of oral inorganic nitrate represent key challenges in maximising its potential benefits to human health. In this context, this article provides a comprehensive overview of the historical discovery and current research status of inorganic nitrate, elucidating the potential challenges and strategies for future applications. This contribution aims to inspire new research avenues, positioning inorganic nitrate as a promising candidate for health promotion and disease prevention.

inorganic nitrate, nitrite, nitric oxide, sialin, salivary gland

doi: [10.1360/TB-2023-0917](https://doi.org/10.1360/TB-2023-0917)