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New discovery by Australia to bulk up gluten-free fibre supplement

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A team of scientists at the University of Adelaide in Australia have for the first time constructed the reference genome for the source of the popular fibre supplement, psyllium husk, which could boost supplies of the versatile plant-derived product. The experts conducted research on psyllium, also known asÂ *Plantago ovata*.

Psyllium has been used for food and medicinal purposes for thousands of years. The seeds of the plant are milled to produce a soluble fibre used in pharmaceuticals and supplements to improve gut health and control blood cholesterol.

Psyllium is also a common ingredient in gluten-free food. The seeds and their husks are naturally gluten-free and when mixed with water, produce a sticky substance that replicates some of the functions of gluten in bread.

This quality makes psyllium an essential ingredient in gluten-free bread and it can be used in a whole range of other baked goods. With the market size of gluten-free foods expected to reach $8.3 billion in 2025, demand for psyllium is predicted to increase.

â??The development of a high-qualityÂ *Plantago ovata*Â reference genome will not only help to boost breeding programmes but will also support lab-based experiments to better understand how carbohydrates in plants are constructed so we can tailor them for food and pharmaceutical usesâ?•, said the researchers.