

# The Hormel Institute

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



## RESEARCH

### **The Hormel Institute Scientist Receives Nearly \$2.5M Grant for Melanoma Vaccine Research That Could Benefit Humans and Canines Alike**

George Aslanidi, PhD, Professor at The Hormel Institute, University of Minnesota, is the recipient of a five-year, nearly \$2,500,000 grant from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The grant was awarded to support the Aslanidi lab's contributions to a preclinical study aimed at developing a novel AAV cancer vaccine strategy for oral melanoma, which could benefit the health of humans and canines alike.

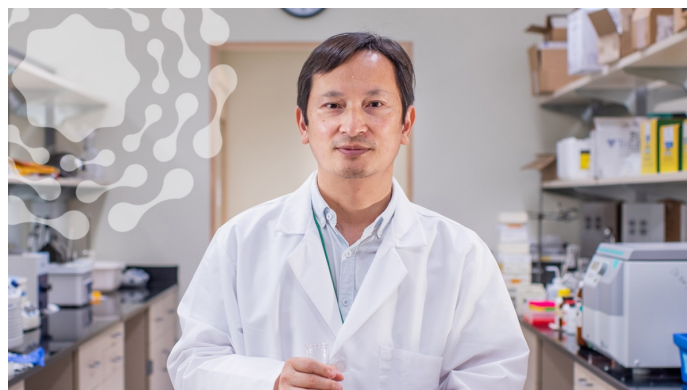
The study, which is in collaboration with the Veterinary Clinical Investigation Center at the University of Minnesota, will investigate the efficacy of an AAV-based vaccine to supplement existing treatments for dogs with oral melanoma in order to limit metastatic spread and cancer recurrence. Dogs involved in this preclinical study are companion animals who were already diagnosed with oral melanoma and enrolled by their owners, and data gathered will help to determine whether advancing to a human clinical trial is warranted.

**"We hope to expand the repertoire of diseases treated by AAV vectors, provide additional therapeutic options for our furry friends, and ultimately for patients. If the vaccine is proven to be effective, it will open new opportunities and a way to treat cancer patients." - George Aslanidi, PhD**



[Read more](#)

### **Articles Authored by The Hormel Institute Scientists Offer Fresh Look at Bacterial Transcription Activation**



The team of Bin Liu, PhD, Associate Professor at The Hormel Institute, University of Minnesota, recently published two high-impact journal articles offering new insights

on the mechanisms of transcription activation in bacteria, a process essential to many cell functions. Dmytro Kompaniets, PhD, and Dong Wang, PhD, are listed as first authors of these publications. More comprehensive understanding of this pivotal process has the potential to benefit a broad range of future research, including for projects aimed at developing more effective antimicrobial treatment strategies for patients, as well as other biotechnological applications.

[Read more](#)



## NEWS

### Lawmakers Meet to Discuss MN Bonding Bill and Support for the Minnesota Bioimaging Center (MBiC) at The Hormel Institute



State legislators met to discuss the 2024 Minnesota Bonding Bill and their support for the Minnesota Bioimaging Center (MBiC) at The Hormel Institute (HI). This Austin Port Authority project will leverage previous state investments, which brought in the seventh cryo-EM Titan Krios instrument in the U.S. Thanks to congressional funding spearheaded by U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith, HI will soon install a major advance to these existing technologies.

The Artis Cryo-Focused Ion Beam, one of the first available in the world and the first to be installed in North America, will allow researchers access to the latest state-of-the-art technology in cryo-electron tomography. **The \$20 million bonding bill request will expand capabilities, broaden access, and provide services related to this technology to scientists throughout Minnesota.**

[Read more](#)



## SUPPORT

### Fifth District Eagles Cancer Telethon

**Congratulations to the Eagles Cancer Telethon for a successful weekend last month!** Thanks to new director Brett Carlson and outgoing director Teresa Chapman, the Fifth District Eagles, KTTC, all event organizers, donors, and performers. We appreciate each of you for supporting



## Lyle Area Cancer Auction

**Thank you Lyle Area Cancer Auction!** The Hormel Institute shared their memorial tribute to Gary Ziegler and is so grateful to everyone who braved the winter weather to support such a fantastic community and worthy cause. A special thanks to The Hormel Institute's Jill Patterson, co-leader of Crop for the Cure, which raised \$17,200 for cancer research this year.



## Thank You Donors



Thank you Runnings! Everett Hackensmith, Runnings Manager, presented PTPP Coordinator Daneka Wiechmann with a check for \$1,125 from Ladies Night in October.



Blooming Prairie Cancer Group surprised Dr. Robert Clarke with a \$5,000 gift at January Business After Hours. Thank you to our faithful friends at Blooming Prairie Cancer Group!



The 5th Annual Zappa Agency Fishing Tournament raised nearly \$3,000 for breast cancer research at The Hormel Institute. Thank you for your support!

## Paint the Town Pink



**Business After Hours**



**Dutchtown Jumpers Swedish Meatball Cook-Off**



**Plunging for Pink**



**Pickle for Pink**



**Austin Bruins Black & Gold Gala**



**Paint the Rink Pink**

**Thank you to everyone who is participating in Paint the Town Pink!** We have already had some great events and we look forward to what the rest of the PTPP season will bring. Your support makes cancer research possible!

### Upcoming PTPP Events:

- February 9: KAUS Radiothon
- February 17: Fishing for a Cure



- February 9-10: Toss for a Cure Bean Bag Tournament
- February 10: Shooters for Hooters

- February 17: VFW Pool Tourney
- March 2: Smashing Cancer Demolition Derby
- March 2: VFW Dart Tourney

Please note - the Fishing for a Cure fishing contest will likely be canceled due to the warm weather, but another event is being planned for the same day. Stay tuned for more information! For more information about all of the PTPP events, [click here](#).

## Meet the 2024 PTPP Ambassador



Meet the 2024 Paint the Town Pink Ambassador, Jessie Meyer! [In this video](#), Jessie shares her cancer journey, the importance of research, and more. Thank you, Jessie, for sharing your inspirational story!

## Dining to Donate: Support PTPP by Dining at Applebee's



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## The Hormel Institute Scientists Present at "Plate of Prevention" Lunch and Learn

Mower County Administrator Trish Harren and her team from the county coordinated and sponsored the new PTPP event, "Plate of Prevention" Lunch and Learn. The Hormel Institute's Leena Hilakivi-Clarke, PhD, and Annie Lin, PhD shared their expertise in food science and nutrition information impacting cancer prevention. **Thank you to all who attended and supported this event!**

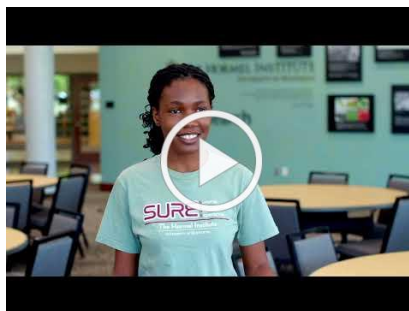


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## COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EDUCATION

### Deadline Approaching for SURE Internship Applications



**Applications are now being accepted for The Hormel Institute's Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) Internship program.** The SURE Internship program allows interns to work with scientists on biomedical research projects. This helps students expand their knowledge of basic research and gain firsthand experience learning about equipment and techniques that are generally not available in undergraduate academic programs.

Students are selected for the SURE internship program based on their high level of academic achievement, recommendations from academic leaders, college majors, and plans to pursue careers in science-related fields. Preference will be given to undergraduates going into their junior or senior year of college. In addition to lab experience, students participate in weekly professional development courses. At the conclusion of the internship, students will highlight their summer work and learning through a presentation and poster session. [Watch this video to learn more.](#)

**Applications are due February 11.** [Click here to learn more and apply.](#)

### The Hormel Institute Receives Grant from Austin Area Foundation



**The Hormel Institute received a \$2,000 grant from the Austin Area Foundation for a new initiative in partnership with Mower County Health and Human Services.** The goal of this new initiative is to teach rural Mower County residents about preventative health, health screenings, and wellness factors. It will also provide resources to help residents continue to live healthy lives. All services will be free and available to people across Mower County. More information coming soon!

## Young Scientist Program

**The second year of the Young Scientist Program is underway!** 6-8 grade students from Austin Public Schools come to The Hormel Institute once a month during the school year to get hands-on experience in biomedical research. This program is possible thanks to a generous donation from Paul and Joanne Worlein to establish The Hormel Institute [Education Fund](#).



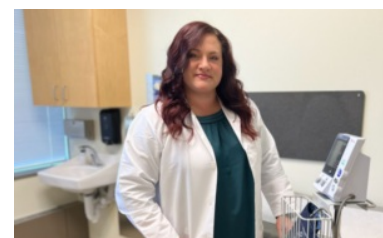
## Blog: Is Sitting the New Smoking? The Hormel Institute's Clinical Research & Outreach Nurse Lays Out the Facts

Recently, researchers analyzed 13 studies on sitting time and activity levels and found that those who sat for more than eight hours a day and didn't engage in physical activity had a risk of dying similar to that posed by obesity and smoking.

One 2023 study from the European Heart Journal found that even sleeping is better for cardiovascular health than sitting.

Another study of more than 480,000 people found that those who spent most of their time sitting at work had a 16% higher chance of dying from any cause and a 34% greater risk of dying from cardiovascular disease. These results remained true even after researchers factored in age, gender, education, smoking, drinking, and body weight.

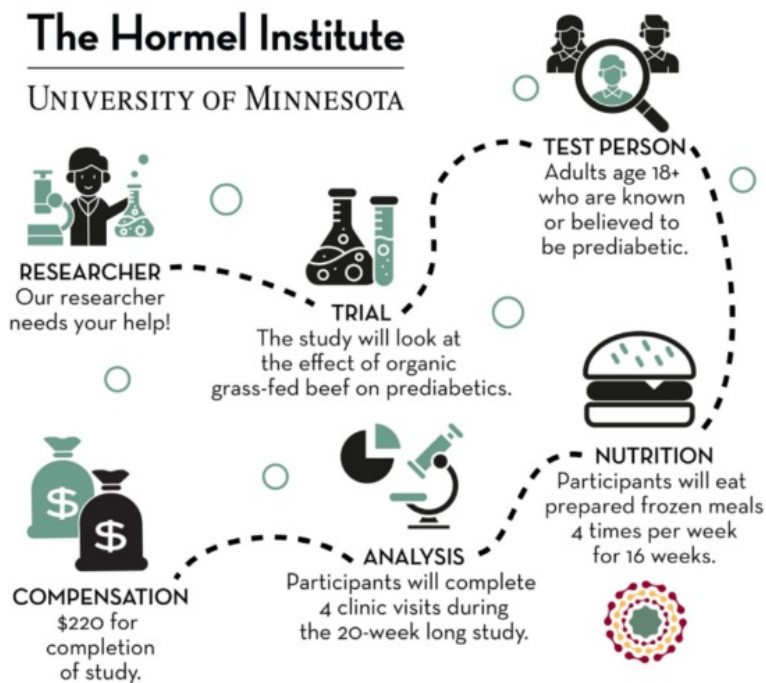
**What can you do to reduce your risk? [Read this blog](#) to find out!**



**Emily Heath, Clinical Research & Outreach Nurse, The Hormel Institute**



## Participate in a Dietary Study



**Help with important research!** At The Hormel Institute, University of Minnesota, we are looking for men and women 18 years or older to take part in a 20-week long dietary research study looking at the effects of organic grass-fed beef on gut health. Participants will get four free meals per week for 16 weeks and compensation up to \$220. For more information, visit [redcap.link/HormelBeefStudy](https://redcap.link/HormelBeefStudy).

## Smoking and Alcohol Study

**The Hormel Institute is looking for men and women 21 years of age or older who are in good health, daily cigarette smokers who are light/non-alcohol drinkers or moderate drinkers for a clinical study.** The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption on the formation of DNA damage in the oral cavity. The goal is to try to identify DNA damage that may contribute to cancers of the head and neck.

You will be asked to attend two clinic visits, each lasting about 60 minutes. The two visits will take place about 2 weeks apart. Prior to the clinic visits you will attend a virtual or in-person consent meeting to discuss the study in detail. You will be paid \$75 for each completed visit and a \$25 bonus for completing your daily surveys. **For questions or to see if you qualify, call (507) 355-5209 or email Research Coordinator Megan Moe at [moe00193@umn.edu](mailto:moe00193@umn.edu).**

## 10,000 Families Study

**The Hormel Institute is partnering with the [10,000 Families Study \(10KFS\)](#) of the University of Minnesota.** 10KFS is a study of family health across Minnesota, looking at how environment, genetics, and daily life affect health and illness over time. We invite families from Mower County and broader Southeast Minnesota to join the study. Let's make sure our region is represented in this landmark project! Participants can come to The Hormel Institute for the in-person part of the study.



**To find out if your family is eligible to join 10KFS, [click here](#).** Questions? Email [tenkfs@umn.edu](mailto:tenkfs@umn.edu).



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