



# **Innovations in the Packaging of Meat and Meat Products—A Review**

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Abstract: This study aims to systematize the knowledge about innovative solutions to understand the composition of packaging materials and bioactive substances used in the packaging processes of meat and meat products, given the contemporary trends and consumer expectations. In edible packaging, the application of natural and renewable biopolymers is gaining popularity as, unlike petroleum-based plastic packaging materials, they do not cause environmental problems. Packaging using active compounds further extends the shelf life of food products compared with traditional packaging by reducing the adverse effects during storage, such as oxidation, microbial growth, and moisture loss. On the other hand, the inclusion of natural bioactive substances in packaging provides an opportunity to increase the shelf life of food products and/or decrease the use of preservatives. This direction offers a wide field for research due to the multitude of substances, their impact, and the properties of the packaged product.

Keywords: active packaging; electrospinning; bioactive substances

## 1. Introduction

Petroleum-based plastics are one of the most commonly used packaging materials due to their stiffness, flexibility, desirable barrier properties, inexpensiveness, and ease of processing [1]. As conventional packaging materials for meat or meat products, synthetic materials in the form of foil are used, often in combination with, e.g., cardboard outer packaging. The most commonly used synthetic plastics for meat packaging include the following: polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP), polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polyester (PET), polyamide (PA), polyvinylidene chloride (PVDC), and ethylenvinyl alcohol [2]. However, the mass use of such materials has resulted in serious environmental problems, such as the depletion of natural resources, garbage pollution, and global warming, as they are both nonrenewable and nondegradable [3–5].Therefore, the efforts of scientists and industry have been directed towards sustainable strategies by developing innovations in the field of packaging materials and packaging methods [6]. An expected property of new packaging materials is that they are reusable, recyclable, or biodegradable once they have served their purpose [7,8]. Therefore, the food industry is looking for an environmentally friendly replacement of non-biodegradable plastics with biodegradable plastics [9].

Active packaging (AP) is a novel packaging method that utilizes various active compounds such as antioxidants, antimicrobials, moisture absorbers, gas absorbers, and ultraviolet absorbers. These active components interact with the packaged food product or the surrounding environment to extend its shelf life by maintaining food quality, safety, and integrity. Compared with traditional packaging, packaging using active compounds further extends the shelf life of food products by reducing the harmful effects during storage, such as oxidation, microbial growth, and moisture loss [6,10].

Recently, there has been huge progress in the construction of AP systems using various methods such as dip coating [11], layer-by-layer assembly [12], electrospinning [13], solvent casting [14], extrusion [15], and homogeneous emulsification [16,17]. AP technologies can be based on either synthetic or natural materials, and some of them contain active



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**Copyright:** © 2023 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https:// creativecommons.org/licenses/by/ 4.0/). ingredients such as antioxidants, antimicrobials, vitamins, flavors, and dyes [18]. In edible packaging, using natural and renewable biopolymers is gaining popularity as they, unlike petroleum-based plastic packaging materials, do not cause environmental problems. In edible films, substances that comply with food regulations should be present, and these films need to be economical, easy to apply, and environmentally friendly [19]. Edible films are classified based on their structural material, namely hydrocolloids (polysaccharides and proteins), lipids, and composites [20]. The limitation for edible packaging is the risk of their contamination and thus becoming inedible. Regardless, if not eaten, edible packaging is inherently biodegradable [21]. New packaging materials ensure higher functionality of the packaging, extending the shelf life and ensuring higher quality and safety of packaged meat [7]. Currently, many novel AP materials are gaining huge interest in the food industry. AP can inhibit the growth of microorganisms on the surface of the food product, enhance its nutritional and sensory properties, increase the shelf life of some food products, and decrease the environmental impact of packaging [22]. As a novel method, innovative packaging not only extends the quality and shelf life of the food product but also monitors its quality during transport and storage. AP and intelligent packaging have been adopted of late to ensure the traceability, safety, and quality of food products [23,24]. The main task of intelligent packaging is to capture and provide information about changes in the quality of packaged goods during transport and storage. They provide information about the conditions of the packaged product, without affecting its quality [25].

In contrast to traditional food packaging, functionalized packaging systems that are developed to load various bioactive compounds in matrix materials can lead to wide-ranging biological effects such as antibacterial and antioxidant effects and thus protect the food product from harmful environmental factors [26–28]. Active packages are developed by embedding a plant-based bioactive material in a polymer. Essential oils are in the spotlight as active ingredients due to their antimicrobial and antioxidant properties [29,30].

This study aimed to systematize the knowledge about innovative solutions to understand the composition of packaging materials and bioactive substances used in the packaging of meat and meat products, given the contemporary trends and consumer expectations. This will help demonstrate the positive effects of using innovative methods in the packaging of meat and its products.

#### 2. Natural Polymers in Food Packaging

The environmental problems caused by conventional polymers have necessitated the search for alternative packaging materials. Biodegradable films based on biopolymers have become such an alternative [31]. In 2020, bio-based plastics used in food packaging amounted to 0.99 million tons, accounting for 47% of the total production of bio-based plastics [1]. The raw materials for the production of biopolymers are relatively plentiful, and the production of biopolymers consumes agricultural waste, which, together with the environmental benefits, makes the production of biopolymers profitable [32].

Biopolymers are popular in food packaging because they are edible and safer for humans. For applications in food packaging, the most frequently studied nanocomposite biomaterials are proteins, carbohydrates, and their derivatives [33–36]. To achieve an environmentally friendly alternative and promote sustainability goals, cellulose- and starch-based nanocomposites can be incorporated into packaging systems [37]. Examples of natural antioxidants for lipid food include, among others, edible films and coatings with an active coating based on cellulose derivatives, chitosan, alginate, galactomannans, or gelatin [38].

Cellulose is the most abundant biopolymer in the world, making it an ideal raw material for use in sustainable packaging materials. Cellulose ethers, such as methylcellulose, hydroxypropylcellulose, hydroxypropylmethylcellulose, and carboxymethylcellulose, are suitable for the production of packaging films [7,39]. Cellulose is obtained from natural sources such as wood, cotton and food waste, agricultural waste, cereal bran, and fruit skins [40]. Its availability from many different sources and being biodegradable, environmentally friendly, and inexpensive have made cellulose an often-preferred material in packaging [41]. Besides being edible and biodegradable, its sensory and organoleptic properties are beneficial; therefore, cellulose can be used in the encapsulation of bioactive substances to enhance the nutritional properties of food products [40].

Starch is one of the most crucial biodegradable polymers because of its abundance, low cost, biodegradability, and renewability [42,43]. Starch-based films have been used in food packaging and preservation technologies as they show excellent film-forming ability and unique gelatinization properties, along with their odorless, tasteless, and colorless nature [5,44]. So far, starch-based films have been extensively used in the packaging of different types of food products (such as meat, fruit, oil, and cheese) as they have good organoleptic and gas barrier properties [45,46]. However, starch-based materials are brittle and hydrophilic, which limits their processing and use. Starch is mixed with various synthetic and natural polymers to improve its properties; this increases the strength of the processing properties of the materials [47].

Another biopolymer is chitosan, which is derived from chitin. Chitosan films have shown good antibacterial and antioxidant performance for food packaging. The amino and hydroxyl groups in the structure of chitosan affect its antimicrobial activity against gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria [48]. Chitosan-based films have a high gas barrier. Their brittleness eliminates the use of plasticizers such as polyols (glycerin, sorbitol, and polyethylene glycol) or fatty acids (stearic and palmitic) [47].

Being a water-soluble natural polymer, gelatin is a protein of biological origin, which shows high biodegradability, biocompatibility, water absorption, nonimmunogenicity, and commercial availability. Thanks to these properties, various forms of gelatin (e.g., foils, scaffolds, capsules, filters) are used in cosmetics, pharmacy, medicine, food, and water filtration [49]. However, due to its hydrophilicity, its structure needs to be stabilized because, in the absence of biopolymer stabilization, gelatin-based materials tend to dissolve and lose their structure [50].

Among the methods available for gelatin structure stabilization, protein crosslinking is one of the most commonly used approaches to achieving hydrolytic stability of samples based on gelatin [51]. Crosslinkers such as glutaraldehyde and genipin are extensively used in this regard. However, there exist potential toxicity issues, along with the need for intensive detoxification strategies considering residual unreacted glutaraldehyde groups. In addition, the high cost of genipins is one of the primary disadvantages while using these crosslinkers [51,52]. The gelatine-based packaging material has a good oxygen barrier compared to other biopolymers and has the ability to be welded, which is important in the production of packaging. The production of gelatin foils is relatively simple; it does not require special conditions for drying and forming the foil [53]. To prevent the risk of toxicity and achieve cost-effectiveness, heat treatment of gelatin along with sugar particles has recently been introduced as an alternative chemical crosslinking method [54,55]. The resulting condensation reaction between proteins and sugar is called the Maillard reaction (MR) [50].

Gelatin-based materials show different properties (e.g., solubility, swelling, antioxidant activity, preservation of morphology after immersion) based on the degree of MR, which depends on parameters such as type of sugar, reaction time, temperature, and pH of the solution. As crosslinkers, pentoses (e.g., ribose) are more reactive than hexoses (e.g., glucose) and disaccharides (e.g., lactose) [56], whereas an increase in the percentage of sugar (up to a certain point), temperature, or pH of the solution induces a further extended response [50,57,58].

To enhance the bioavailability and stability of thiamine in raw and cooked red meat and salmon samples, the thiamine nanofiber nanocoating process has been successfully applied. Specifically, for salmon samples, this process is found to be more effective regarding bioavailability. In addition, it ensures a continuous increase in the thiamine content in red meat and fish samples under cold storage conditions for 3 days. Whereas a maximum bioavailability of 87% was reported for nanocoated red meat samples, for salmon samples, a 94% bioavailability was achieved. Therefore, given these results, in future, this nanotechnology application may play a leading role in the food industry [59].

The most successful edible protein film available on the market is a sausage casing made of collagen. The films reduce leakage and prevent discoloration and fat oxidation of thawed and chilled beef steaks. Collagen-based films are used for processed meats to increase juiciness, reduce drip. For many years, the Japanese meat industry has commercially used films and coatings based on polysaccharides. During processing, the coatings dissolve and integrate with the meat, which has a positive effect on the texture and reduces weight loss, ensuring higher yield [60].

#### 3. Electrospinning

Nanofibers are obtained using electrospinning techniques that use electrostatic forces to form fibers and non-electrospinning techniques that use mechanical force. These include phase separation, drawing, template synthesis, self-assembly, etc. [61].

Electrospinning is a versatile, cost-effective, and convenient method to produce nano-/microfibers with a high surface-area-to-volume ratio, controlled dimensions, high load capacity, low weight, and wide-ranging flexibility [62]. Furthermore, with decades of evolution, electrospinning nanofibers can now be designed with various structures and morphologies to perform specific functions, such as uniaxial [63], hollow [64], core–shell [65], and porous structures [66].

Electrospinning is an easy and versatile nanotechnique for producing nonwoven nanofiber films. Its advantages are as follows: a high surface-area-to-volume ratio, increased porosity, small interfibrous pore size, and high gas permeability. It is widely used in natural and synthetic polymers [5,67]. Thus, electrospinning has gained interest in, among others, textiles, agriculture, water treatment, air filtration, energy storage, cosmetics, electronics and sensors, pharmaceuticals, biomedical products, and packaging [49,50,68].

Among innovative approaches to packaging, electrospinning has gained huge interest in the biomedical and the food industries, especially in meat packaging [23,69–72]. The rapid development of electrospinning has resulted in numerous applications in various fields, including biomedicine [73], food packaging [74], sensors [75], protective materials [76], textiles [77], energy [78], oil–water separation, and others [17,79]. Several applications of electrospinning have been found in food science, e.g., protecting bioactive ingredients from external factors by encapsulating them [80–82] and extending the shelf life of a food product by improving its bioavailability and controlled release of biomolecules [83–85].

Compared with traditional casting films, electrospun nanofibers show numerous unique characteristics such as high surface-area-to-volume ratio, nanoporous structure, high porosity, and high absorption capacity [62,86], which make them more sensitive to the surrounding changes in acidity/alkalinity and make it possible to control the release of the contained bioactive compounds. Thus, of late, electrospun nanofibers have gained much attention in developing food packaging films [14,87,88].

In addition, being a nonthermal process, electrospinning helps maintain the structure stability, particularly when using additives with low thermal stability at high temperatures. The process of electrospinning can be briefly divided into three steps as follows: (1) formation of a conical shape ("tailor's cone") by a charged drop of a polymer solution; (2) formation of a jet at the end of the cone if the electric field strength is sufficient to overcome the viscoelastic force of the solution; and (3) deposition of a solid jet on the collector surface and production of many fibers, with rapid volatilization of the solvent [5,89]. To obtain fibers using solution electrospinning, various materials—including synthetic and natural polymers and their combinations—can be utilized. Among them, synthetic polymers such as polystyrene and polyvinyl chloride, biocompatible and biodegradable synthetic polymers like polylactic acid and polylactic-co-glycolic acid, conductive polymers such as polyaniline and polypyrrole, and natural polymers such as chitosan, alginate, collagen, and gelatin can be directly electrospun into nanofibers [50,90–94].

The electrospinning technique has been used to develop high-performance packaging materials in the food industry, due to its unique advantages: it can produce (1) micro/nanofibers to encapsulate unstable bioactive molecules and load with nanoparticles; (2) edible packaging nanofibers from biopolymers, which show excellent biosafety; and (3) nanofibers for the controlled release of bioactive compounds under a specific stimulus [17].

Natural polymers, especially polysaccharides and proteins, are frequently used to produce nanofibers due to their biocompatibility, nontoxicity, food-grade properties, and biodegradability [95]. In addition, their diversity of functional groups enables a wide range of active ingredients to be bound or trapped using molecular interactions [96]. Functional electrospun mats can be used to develop nanocomposite material from a diverse range of performance-enhanced plastics for packaging applications. In addition, they can be used to reinforce the physical properties of both plastics and bioplastics as transparent gas barrier layers or even as new technologies for designing bioactive packaging with antimicrobial protection and delivering nutraceuticals to food products [97]. Numerous electrospinning stimuli-responsive materials have recently been synthesized, which can achieve the controlled release of active substances, thus producing a long-term biological effect [98,99].

Nanofiber mats are promising candidates in AP [100]. In the AP industry, nanofibers are highly useful tools to protect and deliver bioactive compounds to their destination at the desired time [101,102]. Electrospun nanofibers can improve the barrier and antimicrobial properties of materials in food packaging depending upon their functional properties. These nanofibers can also be utilized as nanosensors to detect and monitor the conditions of the food product during transport and storage [103]. These biological polymers can be based on proteins, lipids, or polysaccharides [104–106]. This advanced technology is originally derived from the enrichment of antioxidants in packaging designs [107–110].

Electrospun fibers show a good capacity to charge active substances, and their huge surface area leads to a rapid response to internal and/or external factors by releasing/activating the trapped compounds in a timely manner [90,95,111].

Thus, as a new technology, electrospinning can improve the overall quality and extend the shelf life of fresh or packaged meat products [95], including (1) protecting products from microbial contamination [3,71,112], (2) preventing lipid and protein oxidation [113,114], (3) developing sensory properties [70,84], and (4) improving the functional and nutritional characteristics of meat products [22]. Electrospinning enables the incorporation of antimicrobial compounds into the matrixes/or packaging mats and allows for a functional effect on the surface of meat or products—where the microbiological activity is located—instead of mixing them directly with food [115].

Starch-based films with nanofibers show an extremely high surface activity, which makes them potential candidates for active food packaging due to their nanosize [17]. In addition, the morphology and structure of electrospun starch fibers can be easily altered to protect numerous active substances and enhance the mechanical and barrier properties [116]. Several factors like fiber orientation, additional ingredients [117,118], and final processing [119] can influence their properties required for food packaging [5].

Results show that zein-based coatings are more suitable in the packaging of food products with a high water content [120]. Yildiz et al. [121] developed an electrospun chitosan/polyethylene/curcumin nanofiber to monitor the freshness of chicken meat. Duan et al. [14] showed that curcumin-loaded nanofibers provide the ability to monitor chicken spoilage in the real world.

The challenge is to overcome the unreliability of bio-based plastics. There is a need to develop a multilayer mixture using additives [1]. In conclusion, electrospinning seems to be a promising technique with potential applications in the fields of functional food products and AP [102]. The advantage of electrospinning is its simplicity, the possibility of using it in a wide range of materials, and its low cost [61].

#### 4. Antioxidant and Antimicrobial Compounds

Many meat products are considered highly perishable because of their high nutrient content. Temperature is the major factor in the activation of the growth of microorganisms and chemical reactions; thus, the cooling temperature has a significant impact on their properties. However, variations in the temperature during storage and transport can impair the quality of the products, e.g., by increasing microbial growth and chemical reactions such as increasing peroxides and thiobarbituric acid (TBA) values [122,123].

To increase the commercial value and safety of beef, cold storage methods and cold chain logistics have been developed and widely used. These methods are used in preserving raw beef, especially in freezing and chilling [124,125]. Freezing below -18 °C significantly extends the shelf life of meat products but degrades the quality of the meat in the freezing–thawing process. In comparison, storage at 4 °C can preserve the sensory quality of meat and lower the energy consumption; however, it cannot inhibit the growth of microbes completely, in particular some psychrophiles, so the shelf life of the products is limited [28,124].

The meat industry is interested in achieving packaging durability goals and producing modern solutions based on bio-based, biodegradable, compostable, recyclable, or reusable materials [126]. Increasing demand for meat has urged significant advances in meat packaging, guaranteeing healthy and safe products. Meanwhile, the safety and quality of meat are dependent on the packaging materials and technologies applied [112,127].

Innovations in food packaging nanomaterials are primarily attributable to their following distinct characteristics: excellent optical, barrier, and thermal properties, antimicrobial activity, and advanced sensing properties affecting their chemical, physical, and biological potential unlike their bulk counterparts [37,128].

Nanomaterials consisting of  $TiO_2$  [129,130],  $SiO_2$  [131,132], AgNPs [133], graphene [134], and nanocellulose [135] possess remarkable characteristics such as high catalytic activity and conductivity, which make them quintessential candidates for biosensory abilities [37].

Exemplary electrochemical immunosensors that are appropriate for the detection of *Salmonella* in meat samples have recently been found in the literature [136]. For example, graphene is a fully reliable biosensing nanomaterial that can be easily integrated with smart packaging systems. Graphene-based nanofibers and electrodes are applied in the development of a flexible detector for ethanol [137], histamine [138], and ammonia [37,139]. Among these films, pigment-based natural colorimetric films have gained considerable attention due to their nontoxicity, biocompatibility, nature of pH sensing, and others [140,141]. These pH-sensitive colorimetric films can show visible color changes while reacting with non-neutral volatile gases generated from high-protein degraded food products, which can provide visual information about the quality and microbial contamination of the food product [14,86,142,143].

To delay lipid oxidation and reduce chemical additives causing health disorders, functional packaging using natural antioxidants is applied to extend the shelf life of meat products [112,144,145].

Antioxidant and antimicrobial compounds used in food packaging are of different origins: natural, such as essential oils, nisin, curcumin,  $\alpha$ -tocopherol and vitamins, phenolicrich plant and pomace extracts, allyl isothiocyanate, and chitosan [146,147]; synthetic antioxidants, such as butylhydroxytoluene and its analogs, butylhydroxyanisole, and t-butylhydroxyquinone [23]; or antimicrobial, such as organic acids (acetic, sorbic and ascorbic, benzoic and propane), nitrites, and nitrates [148,149].

Thymol, which is the primary component of thyme oil (classified as Generally Recognized As Safe by United States Food and Drug Administration), is a promising alternative to chemical preservatives with good antimicrobial and antioxidant properties [150]. Although thymol's potential as a food preservative has been widely discussed, its use in film/coating formulations is highly limited due to its high volatility and hydrophobicity [151]. Given these issues, particular attention has been paid to the encapsulation of plant-derived bioactive compounds in biopolymer nanocarriers [26,28]. Lin et al. [152] used gelatin nanofibers that contain thyme essential oil/ $\epsilon$ -polylysine  $\beta$ -cyclodextrin nanoparticles to control the growth of *Campylobacter jejuni* on the surface of poultry with no effects on the sensory and textural properties and color. The packaged chicken samples showed lower aerobic bacteria counts, total volatile basic nitrogen, trimethylamine and TBA content, and pH values [123].

Cinnamaldehyde (3-phenyl-2-propenal), a component of natural cinnamon oil with a common flavor, is one of the important antioxidant and antimicrobial agents. It can be used to improve the quality of food products and extend their shelf life. Its sensitivity to heat, light, humidity, oxygen, and liquid form at room temperature necessitates its encapsulation. Zein nanofiber mass containing 1000 ppm loaded with cinnamaldehyde showed good bactericidal activity against *Staphylococcus aureus* PTCC 1337 (Persian Type Culture Collection (PTCC)) and *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 with no significant adverse effects on texture or color in nitrite-reduced sausages [123]. The number of *E. coli* and *S. aureus* (colonyforming unit/g samples) decreased in all sausages during storage due to the presence of zein nanofibers with cinnamaldehyde as an antibacterial agent and nitrates [123]. Many studies [84,153–155] reported that cinnamaldehyde, zein nanofibers with cinnamaldehyde, and nitrites show long-term growth inhibition of *S. aureus* and *E. coli*. After 10 days of storage, samples with packages containing phase change materials used for temperature buffering did not contain *E. coli* and *S. aureus* bacteria [123].

Using unstable substances in AP, positive results are observed in nanoencapsulation techniques, including nanoparticles, nanoemulsions, and nanocapsules. This prevents the degradation of, for example, saffron bioactive compounds under adverse conditions until they are delivered for physiological purposes [156]. In this context, electrospinning and electrospraying have recently gained increased interest in encapsulating bioactive ingredients and food packaging. These methods are simple, versatile, nonthermal, and thus highly suitable for the encapsulation of heat-sensitive compounds [157–159]. Studies [159] have indicated that electroyarn containing 30% zein and 10% saffron extract show great potential in extending the shelf life of seafood products and delaying their spoilage during cold storage.

An overview of sample compositions of novel packaging materials, as well as the bioactive substances used and the spectrum of their effects on the quality of packaged food products, is presented in Table 1.

Substance	Matrix	<b>Positive Effects Obtained</b>	Product	Source
	A	ntimicrobial effect		
Tea tree oil	Nanofiber membrane	Inhibition of 99.99% <i>Salmonella</i> after 4 days of operation without affecting the sensory quality	Chicken meat	[160]
Cinnamon essential oil (as core)	Encapsulated in Eudragit L100 (as a shell) by coaxial electrospinning technology	Controlled release, good antibacterial efficacy against <i>E. coli</i> and <i>S. aureus</i>	Pork loin	[161]
Pomegranate peel extract (PE)	Electrospun chitosan/polyethylene oxide (CS/PEO) active nanofibers/active CS/PEO/PE nanofibers	Effective inhibition of <i>E. coli</i> O157:H7 on samples at 4 and 25 °C for 7 and 10 days, respectively, compared to control packaging	Beef	[112]
Thyme (EO)	Silk fibroin nanofibers	<i>Salmonella typhimurium</i> reduction from 6.64 to 2.24 log CFU/g	Chicken meat	[70]

Table 1. Examples and effects of using bioactive substances in packaging materials.

	Table 1. Cont.			
Substance	Matrix	Positive Effects Obtained	Product	Source
Oregano (EO)	Sodium alginate foil	A reduction in <i>Listeria</i> population of approximately 1.5 log at 8 °C and 12 °C at the end of storage and almost 2.5 log at 4 °C	Ham	[162]
Chitosan	Electrospun fibers based on chitosan and poly(ethylene oxide) CS/PEO	The ability to maintain safety and extend the shelf life by a week	Fresh red meat	[163]
Gallic acid + chitosan or carvacrol + chitosan	Starch foil	Complete inhibition of the growth of <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> for 4 weeks of storage, starch films filled with chitosan or chitosan and carvacrol delayed the growth of the microbiota by 1–2 weeks	Ham	[164]
Electrospun gelatin- glycerine-ε-polylysine nanofibers	Gelatine	Growth inhibition of L. monocytogenes	Beef	[165]
Lemon (LEO)	Thermally stable and porous vermiculite (VML), LEO/VML complex, coupled with konjac glucomannan-grafted-poly (acrylic acid)/polyvinyl alcohol composite	Long-term LEO control release effectively inhibiting <i>E. coli</i> growth during storage, thus extending the shelf life of chilled pork by 3 days	Pork	[166]
Methyl ferulate	Zein	Effectively inhibition of microorganism growth in fish meat and slowing down of the production and accumulation of alkaline substances, thus controlling the increase in pH and maintaining freshness	Fish	[167]
Thyme EO/ε-polylysine β-cyclodextrin nanoparticles	Gelatin nanofibers	Controls the growth of <i>C. jejuni</i> on the surface of poultry without affecting the sensory evaluation	Poultry meat	[152]
Eugenol	Gelatin nanofibers	Strong antibacterial activity/growth retardation of total mesophilic aerobic and total psychrophilic bacteria	Meat products	[102]
Covered with poly- caprolactone/chitosan nonwoven fabric (film 1) covered with polycaprolac- tone/chitosan nonwoven fabric reinforced with <i>Colombian propolis</i> extract (film 2)	Linear low-density polyethylene film	Improving color stability and microbiological stability of pork samples	Pork	[168]
	l	Antioxidant effect		
Rosemary extract	Low-density polyethylene	Significant inhibition of lipid oxidation	Pork patties	[169]

Substance	Matrix	Positive Effects Obtained	Product	Source
Chitosan	Gelatin foil	Delaying the oxidation of fats and the formation of methemoglobin	Beef	[170]
Cinnamon (85%) + rosemary essential oil (15%)	Whey protein	Significant inhibition of lipid oxidation	Salami	[171]
Green tea extract	Polyamide	Very good antioxidant capacity and extending the shelf life from 6 to 23 days	Minced meat	[172]
	Antioxid	ant + antimicrobial action		
Beetroot peel extract	Gelatin–sodium alginate coating	Minimum inhibitory concentration of 2.5 mg/mL against Gram-positive bacteria ( <i>S. aureus</i> and <i>E. coli</i> ) and Gram-negative bacteria ( <i>Salmonella enterica</i> and <i>L. monocytogenes</i> ); delaying chemical oxidation and improving sensory characteristics	Beef meat	[173]
Lactobacillus plantarum postbiotics	Bacterial nanocellulose	Reduction (~5 log cycles) in the number of <i>L. monocytogenes</i> in minced meat. <i>L. plantarum</i> postbiotics showed moderate antioxidant activity in meat	Minced meat	[174]
Anethum graveolens (EO)	Plantago major seed mucosa	Action against <i>E. coli, S. aureus,</i> and fungi extending the shelf life of meat from 6 to 18 days; and inhibition of the growth of bacteria and slowing down of oxidative changes	Beef meat	[175]
Clove and argan oils	Poly(lactic acid) films coated with chitosan oil	Low oxygen permeability, high radical scavenging activity, and strong growth inhibition of <i>L. monocytogenes, S. typhimurium,</i> and <i>E. coli</i>	Beef meat	[176]
Aqueous green tea extract	Chitosan coating	Improvement in physicochemical properties (pH, color, and lipid oxidation) and microbiological properties of samples during storage; the inclusion of 0.1% and 0.5% green tea water extract in the 1% chitosan coating effectively retards the formation of malondialdehyde and microbial growth, while having a beneficial effect on the pH and intensity of red pork color	Pork cutlet with bone	[177]

Substance	Matrix	<b>Positive Effects Obtained</b>	Product	Source
ZnO nanoparticles with propolis	Composite film based on pullulan/chitosan (PLN/CTS)	Strong antibacterial activity against <i>E. coli</i> and <i>L. monocytogenes</i> : in meat samples wrapped in PLN/CTS/ZnO/PPS foil before packaging, the value of the total aerobic bacteria count (TABC) remained at the level of 6.7 Log CFU/g after 8 days of storage, controls showed a rapid increase (TABC) of ~6 Log CFU/g after 6 days and finally ~9 Log CFU/g within 8 days; excellent antioxidant activity: after 15 days of storage, while the peroxide values (PV) of packaged meat in the control group increased sharply to 22 meq/kg, meat wrapped in PLN/CTS/ZnO/PPS film showed a much lower peroxide count of ~10 meq/kg, showing approximately 55% reduced lipid oxidation	Pork loin	[178]
Catechin and lysozyme	Gelatin foil	Extending the shelf life and reducing the total number of bacteria, yeasts, and molds. Effective inhibition of lipid oxidation and microbial growth	Minced pork	[179]
Origanum virens (EO)	Whey protein concentrate (WPC)	Inhibition of total microbial load, higher acidity, and protection against discoloration; the EO-WPC film had a positive effect on the retardation of chain reactions of fat oxidation in alheiras	Traditional Portuguese sausages (paínhos and alheiras)	[180]
Terminalia arjuna extract	Maltodextrin and calcium alginate	Lipid oxidation was inhibited, and the number of yeasts and molds was reduced	Chevon sausages	[181]
Ethanol propolis extract	Chitosan film enriched with cellulose nanoparticle	<i>Pseudomonas</i> spp., <i>LAB</i> (lactic acid bacteria), and <i>Enterobacteriaceae</i> slow down the growth of microorganisms and the oxidation of lipids and proteins	Ground beef	[182]
Resveratrol	Gelatin/zein mats	Good antibacterial activity against <i>E. coli</i> and <i>S. aureus</i> , antioxidant activity to inhibit discoloration, and extended shelf life	Pork	[183]
Curcumin (CUR)	Packaging nanofibers based on gelatin/chitosan (GA/CS)	Inclusion of CUR significantly improved the antioxidant and antimicrobial activity of GA/CS/CUR nanofibers	Meat and seafood	[184]

Substance	Matrix	<b>Positive Effects Obtained</b>	Product	Source
Cloves (CL) and cinnamon (CI)	Corn starch (CS)	Inclusion of CL and CI EO in CS film at 3% significantly reduced the microbial population and thiobarbituric acid reactive substances (TBARS) values in raw meat during refrigerated storage	Beef	[185]
Spice EO (Laurus nobilis, LEO; and Rosmarinus officinalis, REO)	Polyvinyl alcohol electroyarn	Active packaging coatings containing LEO and REO extended the shelf life by reducing the process of lipid oxidation and reducing the number of <i>Listeria</i> during cold storage	Chicken breast fillets	[69]

### 5. Summary

The introduction of new technologies in food packaging has made the packaging market dynamic. This involves many changes in, among others, the verification of the usability of new materials in industrial conditions, especially in terms of their impact on the quality and safety of packaged food products. A promising direction is using natural polymers for this purpose, which offers a possibility to solve the problems as a result of the generation of huge amounts of waste by the food industry. However, the inclusion of natural bioactive substances in packaging provides an opportunity to extend the shelf life of food products and/or reduce the use of food preservatives. This provides a wide field for research due to the multitude of substances and the spectrum of their impact, together with the properties of the packaged product.

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