



Consumer drivers shaping weight wellness

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Consumers are increasingly taking a proactive approach to support their holistic health and wellness. Recent changes in lifestyle, such as lower activity and higher stress levels, have advanced this mindset. In fact, 57% of European consumers are aware of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle due to COVID-19[1]. There is also a growing awareness of how weight can affect overall wellness. Research finds 42% of European consumers are trying to lose weight, and 34% say they will engage in more physical activity as a result of COVID-19. This self awareness is becoming increasingly prevalent around the world too, with 75% of consumers in the U.S., Brazil, China, Germany, India and Mexico reporting that “not being overweight” is an area of focus[2].

From Weight Management to Weight Wellness

Contemporary wellness has evolved the concept of dieting and weight management to a more comprehensive approach that includes physical and emotional well-being. More people are aware of the intersections between their weight, how they feel and how they function. Consumers are becoming increasingly mindful of how to maintain a healthy weight. With less focus on counting calories or numbers on the scale, people are embracing nutrition and exercise habits that they believe will contribute to their general wellness. For instance, 70% of European consumers say they plan to eat more healthily as a result of COVID-19[1]. Many stated they plan to add more fruits, vegetables, protein and omega-3 fatty acids, and they are reducing their sugar intake[1].



Additionally, the pandemic has inspired one-third (33%) of European consumers to make greater efforts to seek out food and drink with added functional ingredients[3].

Nourishing the Gut Microbiome

Consumer awareness of the gut microbiome is growing, and many consider it to be the root of well-being. As such, shoppers are seeking microbiome-supporting solutions in all product categories. Consumers in the U.K. reportedly associate probiotics with gut health, overall well-being and immune function support[4]. From yogurts to kombucha, probiotics are increasingly called out on product labels. Moreover, our research shows that fibre is the number one ingredient consumers want to add to their diets for reasons like digestion, weight management and satiety[5]. Fibre can be found in meal-replacement drinks, artisan breads, chips, crackers, frozen desserts and much more.

As for what's next in microbiome support, postbiotics are a rising star. These bacterial products do not contain living microorganisms, so they retain stability during harsh processing conditions, making it possible to incorporate them into a wide variety of applications. This versatility provides optionality and convenience to consumers seeking specialised nutrition products, including those for weight management, such as 3D printed gummies, stick packs and protein bars. We anticipate growing demand for such products, as consumers become more aware that their weight and metabolic health may be linked. Lifestyle changes accelerated by the global pandemic are also a driving force behind the trending spotlight on metabolic health.



Solutions Backed by Science

In Europe, 54% of consumers say they are interested in food and drink products that are customised to meet individual nutritional needs[3]. Health and wellness brands are rising to the occasion by incorporating functional ingredients associated with specific attributes, such as vitamin C to support immune function or electrolytes to support exercise recovery with hydration.

Our extensive portfolio of science-backed solutions helps product developers create offerings that will stand out in the aisles. Through extensive research, we are continually identifying new microbial strains to support the gut microbiome and aspects related to metabolic health and help consumers' meet their wellness needs. For instance, our award-winning BPL1™* (Bifidobacterium animalis subsp. lactis CECT 8145) probiotic and its heat-treated postbiotic counterpart target factors associated with metabolic health[6,7]. Additionally, Fibersol®** is a line of soluble dietary fibre ingredients developed by ADM/Matsutani LLC and supported by over 30 years of extensive clinical research. Clinical research suggests Fibersol® can help to reduce blood sugar spikes after a meal[8,9], and it promotes the growth of gut microbes[10,11].



Enjoyable Sensations Key for Program Adherence

For any good habit to stick, it's important that people have an enjoyable experience that they look forward to repeating. The sensory experience is key to buyer retention and increases the likelihood of consumer adherence to weight management programmes. Therefore, wellness-oriented foods and beverages must be appealing in taste, texture, aroma and appearance, in addition to their nutritional profiles and advertised claims. When a product experience is positive, consumers typically feel good, which can also help support emotional well-being and increase the potential consumers will repeatedly incorporate the product into their routines.

A blend of botanicals, biotics and other functional ingredients can help support and elevate tailored solutions with both flavour and function. Our vast range of high-quality botanical extracts, standardised plant extracts and concentrated fruit and vegetable powders work together seamlessly with many other ingredients to create offerings that can add consumer-preferred attributes and provide an enticing sensory experience. Furthermore, botanicals and plant-based inclusions are recognisable ingredients sourced from nature, which help satisfy the clean label preferences of wellness shoppers. With more people taking a values-based approach to purchasing, it's important for brands to highlight small details that can have a big impact with consumers.



As a full-service partner to food and beverage brands, we take a holistic approach to innovation. It starts with a deep understanding of the consumer, including what motivates their behaviours, their psychological and physiological responses to product consumption, and the subjective perceptions of how they feel afterwards. These insights, combined with our technical ingenuity, formulation know-how, broad pantry of ingredients and cutting-edge solutions, help our customers recognise growth opportunities and bring tailored wellness products to market.

**BPL1® is a trademark registered for Biopolis S.L. in the EU, the US, South Korea and other countries.*

***Fibersol® is a trademark registered for ADM/ Matsutani LLC in the US.*

****Local regulations must be reviewed to confirm permissibility of ingredients for each food category.*

References:

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