

A collage of health and wellness items including ginger, honey, lemons, a thermometer, a face mask, and pills.

# IMMUNITY INSIGHTS

## Immune System Health in the Food & Beverage Space

So far, the '20s have been largely defined by health and wellness. Headed into the third year of the pandemic, it's not surprising that protection against illness and disease – both general and specific -- remains a core consumer concern and a driver of product development. The widespread clamor for items that purportedly provide immune support is expected to continue, as people seek to fortify their bodies and minds with foods, beverages and supplements that are rich in nutrients and appealing in flavor. From new product introductions to flavors of interest, read on to see what's trending – and what's on deck – in the immune health space.

## DEFINING IMMUNITY

While COVID-19 has been top of mind since early 2020, the concept of immunity extends well beyond the pandemic. Today's consumers seek out foods, beverages and supplements that can help them ward off a host of illnesses and diseases, from COVID to the common cold and other ailments. One of the few silver linings of the pandemic has been the heightened awareness about immune health and the role that ingredients play in supporting the human immune system. The adage about an ounce of prevention rings ever true, as people look to live not just longer lives, but healthier lives.



### WHO'S IN TUNE WITH IMMUNE?

Interest in products that taste great and positively impact the immune system is widespread. It's common among older consumers (i.e. Baby Boomers and older Gen X'ers) who are guarding their health as well as younger ones with a more holistic health and wellness mindset.

- According to findings from Innova Market Insights, consumers in the Millennial and younger Gen X age groups are the most concerned about immunity, underscoring the longer-term implications for immune health and wellness.

### ■ IMMUNE SYSTEM HEALTH

was rated by consumers as the #1 most important topic as it relates to food, beverage & healthcare products they consume and purchase according to a FONA survey.

### ■ 70% OF GLOBAL CONSUMERS

say they have changed their diets and lifestyles in a bid to improve their immunity, according to FMCG Gurus.

### ■ IMMUNITY-BOOSTING/FUNCTIONAL INGREDIENTS

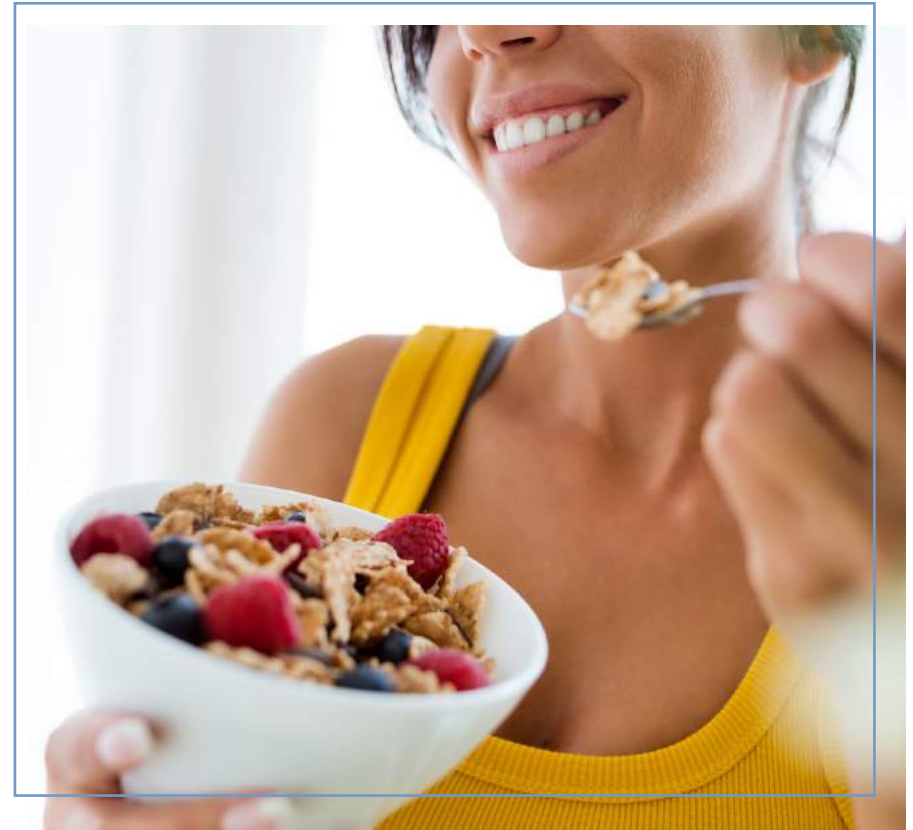
were included in a list of the Top 3 macro trends for 2022, according to the National Restaurant Association.

# THE RIGHT (FOOD) STUFF

“You are what you eat” is a phrase that’s instilled in people early and often, and most understand the intrinsic link between healthy eating and healthy living. With a ramped-up overall focus on health and wellness over the past few years has come growing interest in nutrients that provide immune support, including certain vitamins and minerals, adaptogens and probiotics, prebiotics and postbiotics. Many of these ingredients offer unique flavors, colors, textures of their own and can be incorporated into a multitude of products.

## A KEY DISTINCTION:

Food and beverage developers need to recognize the importance of marketing products as providing immune system support versus promising straight-up immunity. This is an important distinction to make as it’s hard to scientifically prove whether or not a food or beverage can prevent or cure an illness. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) often send warning letters to several companies who have made unsubstantiated claims about their product’s ability to cure or prevent illness/disease.



86%

of consumers agree that eating healthy is important for a strong immune system.

- KANTAR PROFILES; MINTEL

# FLAVOR FAVES

Consumers have expressed certain flavor preferences when seeking out products that support their immune health. Some of the flavors are delivered with immune-enhancing ingredients, like citrus fruits, while others are flavor additions that elevate the eating or drinking experience.

*A recent FONA consumer survey asked 1,000 consumers to rate the flavors listed below for the inclusion in an immune boosting food and/or beverage product.*

1. Mandarin Orange
2. Tangerine
3. Tangerine Citrus
4. Yuzu Lemon
5. Mixed Berry
6. Forest Berry
7. Blackberry Hibiscus
8. Blueberry Acai
9. Blueberry Pomegranate
10. Orange Ginger
11. Honey Elderberry
12. Elderberry Mint
13. Berry Lemonade
14. Lemon Raspberry
15. Cherry Berry
16. Tropical Citrus Punch
17. Mango Peach
18. Lemon Chamomile
19. Lemon Ginger
20. Elderberry

Source: Suzy

# IMMUNE BOOST

Consumers are making moves to boost their immunity, from increasing their consumption of vitamins and supplements to exercising regularly and consuming more fruits and vegetables. While a number of ingredients have been shown to improve or sustain immune resilience, some are trending more than others, due to their nutritional benefits, functionality and, often, taste. Let's take a look at these ingredients and the actions consumers are taking to boost their immune health.

## CONSUMER ACTIONS TO BOOST IMMUNE SYSTEM HEALTH:

1. Increased consumption of vitamins & supplements
2. Consuming more fruits & vegetables
3. Exercising regularly
4. Try to get a good night sleep
5. Taking prebiotics and probiotics

## TRENDING IMMUNE SYSTEM HEALTH INGREDIENTS:

- Citrus Fruits
- Green tea/matcha
- Turmeric
- Probiotics/prebiotics/postbiotics
- Beta-glucans

## PRODUCTS OF NOTE



**YOPLAIT POWER ORANGE WITH MANGO AND CHIA LOW FAT YOGURT** is a kosher certified product that contains vitamins D, A, C, E and zinc and is said to support the immune system. The grade A yogurt contains live, active cultures and is flavored with other natural flavors.



**YISHI MATCHA LATTE OATMEAL** is described as brimming with powerful antioxidants and natural caffeine, and features matcha, non-dairy coconut milk, hemp seed, nourishing flaxseed and almonds.



**DOLE ESSENTIALS MANDARIN ORANGES** in a Blend of 100% Fruit Juices with Turmeric is an excellent source of antioxidant vitamin C to support a healthy immune system and promote collagen and connective tissue formation.

55% of consumers said that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



**POPPI RASPBERRY ROSE PREBIOTIC SODA** is infused with apple cider vinegar, contains 5g of sugar, 7% juice and prebiotics for a healthy gut and immunity sidekick.

32% of consumers said that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



**REBL STRAIGHT BLACK STACKED COFFEE** is a cold-brewed coffee layered with lion's mane and reishi and contains L-theanine. The product is said to support immunity and deliver smooth, balanced energy.

23% of consumers said that they likely or definitely would buy this product.

# HYDRATE, HYDRATE, HYDRATE

Another link to immune health is as clear as, well, water. Research studies have affirmed the importance of hydration in immunity, opening fresh opportunities for ready-to-drink beverages, including flavored and enhanced waters.



“Waters/beverages that incorporate micronutrients and other immunity-boosting ingredients can exhibit dual-benefit formulation and help achieve consumers’ fluid intake requirements. The superior hydration qualities of gel water can inspire new on-the-go drink products, tapping into new approaches to functional hydration.”

- MINTEL

## PRODUCTS OF NOTE



**VOSS + VITAMIN D PURIFIED WATER** Enhanced with Vitamin D, Minerals and Electrolytes is infused with citrus fruit essence. The product is said to deliver 50% of the recommended daily intake of vitamin D per bottle.

29% of consumers said that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



**CLOUD WATER + IMMUNITY BLACKBERRY & LEMON & ROSEMARY NATURAL SPARKLING BEVERAGE** is formulated with 100% of the recommended daily intake of vitamin D and zinc that are said to provide daily immunity support when needed most..

21% of consumers said that they likely or definitely would buy this product.

# TRUE TO FORM

Strong demand for products that support immunity, and versatility and diversity of ingredients, open opportunity product development in many categories. In fact, 383 food and beverage products with some kind of claim about immune health were rolled out during the first half of 2021 according to the Wall Street Journal.

**SNACKS:** Snacks formulated with ingredients that offer immunity-supporting properties are on the hotlist among consumers of all ages.

**DRINKS:** According to Innova Market Insights, growing subcategories for products with immune claims include soft drinks and hot beverages.

**SPORTS NUTRITION PRODUCTS:** Many products aimed at athletes and those who work out regularly for health and wellness reasons carry immune support claims.

**BABY/TODDLER PRODUCTS:** Parents have long sought nutrient-rich foods and beverages for babies and toddlers, but the stakes for immune health are higher now. New products with language about immune support are hitting the shelves to meet demand.

## PRODUCTS OF NOTE



**LOLA DARK CHOCOLATE ALMOND VEGAN PROBIOTIC SNACK** is said to boost immunity, increase energy, enhance protein absorption and improve gut health, and provides 1 billion CFU probiotics per bar.

30% of consumers said that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



**CORE ORGANIC HYDRATION BLUEBERRY FLAVORED NUTRIENT ENHANCED WATER BEVERAGE** contains 4% juice, 1g of sugar and 10 calories per bottle, and is flavored with other natural flavors. It is said to support daily immunity with zinc and is free from GMOs and caffeine.

50% of consumers said that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



**NESTLÉ NIDO KINDER 1+ POWDERED MILK BEVERAGE** with Vitamins, Minerals, and Prebiotic Ingredients is a milk beverage is suitable for toddlers aged between one year to three years, contains vitamins A, C and D, iron and zinc, and is claimed to boost immunity.

35% of consumers said that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



**NURTURME SUPER IMMUNITY ORGANIC POWER BLEND** is said to support immune health and contains bananas, to support brain function, energy and digestion; pumpkin, for eye health and immunity; celery, which supports the immune system; and Staimune, inactivated cultures that have been shown to support immune health.

54% of consumers said that they likely or definitely would buy this product.

# THE TAKEAWAYS

Demand for foods and beverages that support immune health remains strong, fueled by the desire to prevent and weather illnesses like COVID-19 as well as to build up resilience for a host of other potential conditions. Product developers can incorporate a variety of ingredients said to support immune health in a range of products, leveraging nutritional properties as well as functionality and flavor. Expect immunity to be a long-term topic and trend, as people of all ages are mindful of shoring up their physical and mental health and seek out convenient, palate-pleasing products.



## YOU DESERVE MORE. LET'S GET STARTED.

What does true partnership look like? You deserve a flavor partner ready to turn these trends into the tangible.

Let FONA's market insight and research experts get to work for you. Translate these trends into bold new ideas for your brand. Increase market share and get to your "what's next." Our technical flavor and product development experts are also at your service to help meet the labeling and flavor profile needs for your products to capitalize on this consumer trend. Let's mesh the complexities of flavor with your brand development, technical requirements and regulatory needs to deliver a complete taste solution.

From concept to manufacturing, we're here for you — every step of the way. Contact our sales service department at 630.578.8600 to request a flavor sample or chat us up at [www.fona.com/contact-fona/](http://www.fona.com/contact-fona/)

## SOURCES

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- Suzy

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