

Nutrition Knowledge - China - October 2020

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“While consumers’ demand for healthy eating remains high, their nutrition knowledge is also increasing. To further help consumers learn nutrition knowledge efficiently, brands could visualise their products’ key-featured ingredients via front-of-pack design.”

- Catherine Liu, Research Analyst, 23 October 2020

This report looks at the following areas:

- Evaluating consumers’ current healthy eating habits.
- What nutritional attributes are sought after on packaged food and drink products and special dietary concepts.
- Consumers’ attitudes towards food processing techniques.
- How brands, companies and manufacturers could react to market opportunities and threats after the COVID-19 outbreak.

Consumers’ demand for healthy eating has grown significantly. Solutions to fit more detailed occasions in healthy eating are expected to increase their pace of growth, since most consumers think that they have not done enough when it comes to specific dietary choices (eg eat enough coarse grains, maintain a light diet, calorie control, etc). In addition to expanding product offerings targeting specific occasions, consumers’ high interest in personalised nutrition solutions (eg health surveys or diagnostics paired up with healthy food and drink products or diet plans) will become important in helping them achieve greater effectiveness in nutritional intake.

Consumers will invest more time in seeking nutrition information on product packaging. They are more interested in paying attention to special ingredients that deliver health functions (eg protein, ingredient lists) than just the correct intake of nutrients needed (eg the nutrient reference values). Moreover, they will invest more money in products with safety claims (eg organic certification) and fortification features (eg “added” claims). This provides favourable market conditions for packaged food and drink products to include more visualised nutrition information (eg usage of “front-of-pack” labelling for special ingredients, or offering transparent supply chain information to prove organic claims) to boost products’ healthy image as well as increasing value perception.

Consumers also have diverse opinions when it comes to their perspective on special diets. Chinese medicinal diets need to be made more trendy, and this might be particularly driven by COVID-19, with young consumers the key demographics in increasing usage frequency of TCM. Meanwhile, consumers prefer more localised flavours and desire more specific healthy-boosting benefits in western-style meal choice. The foodservice sector is therefore expected to see a rise in modernising Chinese medicinal diet concepts (eg highlight the added values of specific botanicals and nutrients that fit with TCM theories, or crossover with Western light meal concepts), taste innovations aiming to suit Chinese consumers’ palate (eg use advanced technology to maintain the flavour or aroma of certain healthy ingredients), as well as exploring more ingredients or ingredient combinations that fit consumers’ sophisticated health needs (eg light meals paired up with health supplement drinks targeting specific health improvement).

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