

Product Development Guide

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Immune health trends and solutions

Formulating for today's growing immune health category

Natural Products Insider®

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Immune health trends and solutions

Formulating for today's growing immune health category

If there is a silver lining to the COVID-19 pandemic, it's that this global crisis has pushed health to the forefront of consumers' minds. Along with practicing social distancing, running errands only when necessary and taking other measures to lessen their risk of exposure to the virus, Americans everywhere are reevaluating their diet and lifestyle habits.

Suddenly, the health and wellness advice they've heard for years—exercise, get sufficient sleep, minimize stress, eat lots of fruits and vegetables—has come into sharp focus, and they are increasingly putting these recommendations into daily practice. Even many of those who already prioritized their health are stepping up their efforts further. By adopting healthy habits, consumers aim to bolster their immune system against the coronavirus—or any other pathogen that could cross their path—both now and down the line. In other words, they want to prepare their bodies as best they can.

To complement these actions, more consumers are turning to dietary supplements. A *Nutrition Business Journal* (NBJ) survey of 1,000 U.S. adults conducted March 30, 2020, found that 26% increased their supplement usage in March compared to February. What's more, 39% expect to be taking more supplements three months from the survey date than they do now. Perhaps most interestingly, 20% of respondents who reported “never” buying these products predict they will come June.



Sales of immunity products surged 199% for the year ending March 22, 2020

Mass multioutlet channel (grocery, drug, club and convenience stores, plus Walmart and other mass retailers)



↑ **84%**

Hand sanitizers



↑ **128%**

Over-the-counter painkillers and fever reducers



↑ **77%**

Vitamins



↑ **30%**

Gastrointestinal products including probiotics

Source: IRI's COVID-19 and the Economy: Tracking the Dramatic Pivot of U.S. Consumer and Shopper Behavior report.

While these numbers represent all types of supplements, from prenatal vitamins to joint support to protein powders, one category is driving the lion's share of sales: immune support.

To illustrate, market research firm IRI's *COVID-19 and the Economy: Tracking the Dramatic Pivot of U.S. Consumer and Shopper Behavior* report reveals some jaw-dropping numbers. In the mass multioutlet channel (grocery, drug, club and convenience stores, plus Walmart and other mass retailers), sales of immunity products surged 199% for the year ending March 22, 2020. That unprecedented growth tops both hand sanitizers, which shot up 84% over the same time period, and over-the-counter painkillers and fever reducers, which notched 128% growth. Meanwhile, sales of vitamins and gastrointestinal products including probiotics—all tied to immunity—jumped 77% and 30%, respectively.

A look at the top-selling supplements on Amazon is also very telling. On May 4, 2020, for instance, several of the top 20 bestsellers carried immunity claims, including apple cider vinegar, vitamin C, vitamin D, probiotics and elderberry products.

These purchasing patterns clearly show that, now more than ever, consumers are taking a proactive approach to immunity—and they view immune-supporting supplements as a key strategy. Rather than waiting until they experience symptoms of illness and then reaching for pharmaceuticals, they are incorporating supplements into their daily regimens while they are still healthy.

This explains why the immune health market has expanded steadily for the last 15 years, according to NBJ, with larger sales spikes around severe cold and flu seasons. In 2019, well before COVID-19 was on most Americans' radars, the category grew an estimated 8.5% to reach \$3.3 billion. And now that the coronavirus has compelled even more people to do whatever they can to stay well, NBJ predicts immune health supplement sales will spike above 15% in 2020.

A look at the top-selling supplements on Amazon

On May 4, 2020, for instance, several of the top 20 bestsellers carried immunity claims.



Apple cider vinegar



Vitamin C



Vitamin D



Probiotics



Elderberry products





Immune-boosting solutions

As for which types of immune health products consumers are buying, there is a vast array. According to NBJ's 2018 category breakdown (the latest available), vitamin C accounts for 17.5% of sales, multivitamins 16.8%, combination herbs 14.8%, homeopathics 14.1%, probiotics 9.1% and echinacea 4.1%. The remaining 22.8% of sales go to other kinds of products, everything from single herbs to essential minerals to formulas featuring novel branded ingredients.

While tried-and-true immune health solutions such as elderberry, vitamin C and zinc will continue selling well this coming year, now is also a prime time to introduce innovative new options. There is a larger captive audience for immune support than perhaps ever before—and there are so many different ways in which dietary supplement ingredients can influence the immune system.

For instance, there is definitely room for more probiotic-based products, as consumers increasingly understand the connection between gut health and immunity. Adaptogenic herbs, too, are worth exploring, because they help the body respond to stressors and achieve balance. Ingredients that deliver beta-glucans and antioxidants can also anchor immune-supporting supplements.

Today's proactive-health consumers do their homework, however, so they are unlikely to be dazzled by products that make lofty immunity claims without research to back them. Therefore, when designing unique new supplements, brand owners and formulators must partner with ingredient suppliers that are trustworthy, transparent and eager to share the science supporting the safety and efficacy of their offerings. ♦





Formulator's Resource

Q&A



Company Name: Chenland Nutritionals Inc.

Contact Name: Gale Acabal

Title: Product Manager

1 What specific ingredients supporting immune health do you offer for brands in supplement applications?

Jadeimmune™ is a synergistic herbal extract complex comprised of *Astragalus membranaceus root*, *Atractylodes macrocephala rhizome* and *Saposhnikovia divaricata root*. The formulation has been studied extensively for its immune supporting effect.

Astragalus has more than 2,000 years of edible history and a wide range of applications worldwide. It is suitable for strengthening fitness and has been used in a variety of dietary supplement products supporting respiratory health.

2 What advancements and innovations do you offer in support of specific formulations? Are your ingredients supported by specific science and studies?

At Chenland Nutritionals, our R&D team consists of over 50 members featuring experts from Cornell University, the University of Chicago, and other advanced research institutions specializing in product development and formulation. We specialize in TCM-based brand ingredients scientifically backed through in-vitro and in-vivo testing, alongside rigorous preclinical and clinical trials.

In addition, Chenland's R&D team is studying the effect of Jadeimmune™ on animals immune health, which will help provide evidence to support further clinical studies. We are also in the process of conducting human clinical trials with a CRO to further study the effect of Jadeimmune™ on immunity.

3 How do you define your company's point of differentiation in the market?

Chenland Nutritionals is a leading supplier of natural brand ingredients. We work with the world's top nutrition experts when designing our dietary supplements, undergoing rigorous safety and efficacy tests to ensure their quality. Only GAP-verified herbal and marine products are selected in our formulations, which utilize over 2,000 years of TCM history whose health benefits are scientifically validated through our in-vitro and in-vivo testing, preclinical and clinical human studies. Our goal is to provide innovative product solution to our customers, all while meeting the increasing demand for natural ingredients and health.

4 Do you offer ingredients supported by certifications (Kosher, USDA Organic, nonGMO, gluten free, etc.)? Are there other specific claims that your ingredient(s) supports?

Jadeimmune™ is clean label, NON-GMO, GMP-certified, gluten-free, and eco-friendly. It is also water soluble and suitable for RTD application.



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Supports Immunity, Physical Fitness, and Respiratory Health
Allergy and Nasal Relief to support breathing quality
Water Soluble and Suitable for RTD Application

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Effective Plant-Based
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