



Bulletin Board

News, information and comment

The voice of
the natural health
industry



Staying sharp with nutrition

So, as we enter another New Year, one thing I think we can be certain of is that it will continue to challenge us, especially as we strive for our industry's voice (so excellently represented by the HFMA) to be heard in the continuing melee of Brexit negotiations and developments. In fact, the world today is continually demanding of our brain function, and keeping ourselves sharp, agile and healthy in this area is vital.

We're constantly required to multitask, remember, concentrate and articulate, and are subjected to a daily barrage of stimulation from so many sources, especially smartphones, computers, tablets and televisions. It is in this challenging modern environment that our role as an industry and association in 'helping a nation to be healthier' is even more essential, as nutrition can help keep our brains, and therefore our bodies, in top condition.



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The brain is the operating system of the human body, and is responsible for receiving complex inputs from the environment; organizing thoughts, memory and planning; understanding and using language; and controlling our motor actions. Normal brain function is dependent on multiple interlinking factors, many of which may be influenced by nutritional factors.

Neurotransmitters such as acetylcholine, glutamate and dopamine are required for memory, stimulation and motivation, respectively, and require raw materials including choline, amino acids and B vitamins for synthesis. Healthy nerve cell structure is critical and relies on

essential fats and phospholipids for membrane function. Good circulation to delicate neural and vascular tissues, along with good antioxidant status, are essential to reduce oxidative damage.

Lifestyle factors are often overlooked, but play a key role in cognitive function. Stress has been identified as a factor in cognitive decline, while anxiety levels have been linked to the progression from mild cognitive impairment to Alzheimer's disease. Maintaining a social life and staying physically active is associated with continued cognitive health, whereas social isolation and loneliness have been identified as risk factors for a decline in cognitive function.

The saying by Thomas Edison seems appropriate here: 'The chief function of the body is to carry the brain around'. So, here's to a healthy, successful and brainy 2018 for all of us!

Getting the best from the HFMA

The highest standards

When it comes to regulatory standards, the natural health industry is one of the most complex in the world. Navigating this landscape can be a huge challenge for any company, no matter how experienced. Part of the HFMA's extensive membership offering includes beneficial rates for the specialist, highly cost-effective CLEAR CHECK service, which is designed to steer companies safely through the regulatory minefield. Encompassing the areas of copy, labelling, education, advertising and regulation, CLEAR CHECK's Code of Practice Administrators have over 50 years of combined experience offering advice to companies seeking help with understanding the complexities of the landscape before them, and administering the HFMA's Code of Advertising Practice.

THREE TOP TRENDS FOR 2018

Every new year brings interesting new health trends that impact the health food industry, so it is appropriate now to look ahead to the trends for the next 12 months.

Last year saw a keen interest in gut-boosting foods; a trend that is due to grow further in the coming year. While probiotic supplements – particularly those in yoghurt form – have been popular for many years, there has been a marked increase recently in more homemade alternatives and functional foods such as kimchi, sauerkraut, kefir and miso. The case for probiotics, further strength-

ened by the well-publicized overuse of antibiotics, is one that will continue to be widely advocated in 2018.

There will also be a fungus frenzy this year, with the innumerable benefits of mushrooms sure to make headlines. For starters, their medicinal credentials are impressive, with research suggesting they support healthy immune function and could help the body deal with the negative effects of stress. Additionally, they are at the heart of the new 'blenditarian' movement, which combines ground beef with ground mushrooms to make a savoury

but much healthier (lower in fat and calories) and earth-friendly burger, and is sure to crop up on more and more restaurant menus as the year rolls on.

The popularity of kale smoothies, green supplements and matcha lattes may have been considered overkill in 2017, but blue is set to be the colour this year when it comes to supplements and health foods. Lattes and smoothies packed with the likes of blueberries, blue spirulina and even blue algae have begun to rival their green counterparts, and will continue to do so throughout 2018.

News ...

Study reveals high street supplement can aid stroke survivors

A new study has suggested that high street supplements can boost memory, strength and speech in stroke survivors. Research conducted by Nanjing University in China analyzed 330 individuals who had suffered an ischaemic stroke; it found that those participants who took 450mg of ginkgo biloba capsules alongside 100mg of aspirin every day for six months scored better in the memory, attention and language tests than those taking the painkiller alone. 46,000 people in the UK are affected every year by strokes, and these exciting findings may signal a road to a more complete recovery for many sufferers.