

VITAMIN D IS A LOCKDOWN POSITIVE



Many of us find ourselves living in a space between the struggles of lockdown, and an atmosphere of hope that is edging our way. It seems that we're constantly adapting to a 'new normal' while waiting for the actual normal to return.

At times like this, it's important to glean as much 'real life' data as possible to inform our thinking and create effective consumer engagement strategies, and we're pleased that our new Health of the Nation survey of 10,000 UK adults conducted in December gives real insight into consumer health and spending habits as the pandemic progressed.

- When asked about their general health, 19.8% felt that this had improved, whereas 31.5% felt it had worsened. This was most pronounced in the 25-34 age group
- More consumers (41.6%) are reaching out to find information about health and wellness, with 88.1% saying that they find it easy to find and research the right information on supplements
- 30% consider supplements to be an 'investment in good health' and, since the start of the pandemic, many are supplementing for the first time, the highest of which is vitamin D at 63.3%

This reflects what many have been seeing: a reaching out by the consumer, a thirst for knowledge



ESTHER MILLS-ROBERTS
Communications
Manager
Health Food
Manufacturers'
Association

and increased supplement use, most notably with vitamin D.

There has been a unique and, some might say, unprecedented 'collective thinking' about the importance of vitamin D, including supplementary messaging and rollout, increased consumer awareness and hard work behind the scenes to promote the benefits of supplementation.

Our Executive Director, Graham Keen explains: "At the HFMA, we have worked hard, with our public affairs advisers, Cicero, to raise the prominence of natural health products in Westminster and Whitehall, and specifically vitamin D supplements, in supporting immune health nationally.

"Our goal was to make sure that natural health doesn't go unnoticed. What's more, we continue to press the message that health stores, and our member companies that supply them, are an essential lifeline for those needing natural health products, a listening ear and local expertise and advice."

Dr Michele Sadler, scientific adviser to the HFMA, points out that assessment of vitamin D and immune function is ongoing: "In December, a joint rapid guideline from PHE, NICE and SACN recommended that health professionals and practitioners should encourage people to follow PHE advice to take a daily supplement of 10mcg vitamin D, but should not

offer vitamin D supplements solely to prevent or treat Covid-19, unless as part of a clinical trial.

"The results of clinical trials investigating whether vitamin D offers any specific benefit over and above its general role in supporting the immune system are eagerly awaited. However, with the prevailing situation in which we find ourselves, it makes sense to ensure a good dietary intake of all the nutrients that are important for the immune system, particularly vitamin D."

Data is proving how the pandemic has pushed consumer contact from store to screen. Our HealthyDoesIt campaign encourages footfall from screen to store. It's pulled many people together – manufacturers, retailers, trade associations – as a focal point. It's given us something to work towards with positivity and purpose.

Up the Revolution – More on HealthyDoesIt, Viewpoint Marketing, page 39



Tel: 0208 481 7100
Email: hfma@hfma.co.uk