SYNERGY®
INSPIRING TASTE™



2026-2027

NUTRITION TRENDS

Protein Upgraded, Boosted Beverages & Wellness Unlocked

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The future of nutrition isn't about piling on new functions — it's precise personalization: lighter protein formats, fruit-forward flavors, and everyday beverages that deliver benefits without the crash. In 2026, shoppers are signaling clear preferences across three pillars — Protein Upgrade, Boosted Beverages, and Wellness Unlocked — with data showing rising protein adoption, accelerating prebiotic claims, and fast-growing greens.

This report translates those signals into flavor, format, and formulation guardrails your team can execute now.

INNOVATION PILLARS

- Protein Unlocked 
- Boosted Beverages 
- Wellness Unlocked 

INTRODUCTION

Nutrition in 2026 reflects a category that is being reshaped by consumer intention rather than broad aspiration. Shoppers aren't looking for "more" nutrition — they're choosing products that match who they are and what they need in the moment, whether that's hydration, recovery, clean energy, or age-aligned wellness. This shift toward identity and mission-based shopping is redefining how brands formulate and position their products.

The rise of three major pillars — Protein Upgrade, Boosted Beverages, and Wellness Unlocked — captures this transformation. Protein adoption continues to climb, with clear formats, upgraded RTDs, and evolving bar profiles meeting demand for performance that feels lighter and easier to consume. Beverages are becoming the new delivery system for everyday health, driven by interest in low/no sugar, natural ingredients, protein, and prebiotic functionality. And wellness has expanded beyond immune support into gut health, healthy aging, greens, and formulas designed for families and kids.

Together, these forces signal a category where nutrition is becoming more tailored, refreshing, and sensorially rewarding, creating new opportunities to innovate with purpose — and clarity.

PROTEIN UPGRADED

PIILLAR ONE

Protein remains the category's strongest engine of growth. 3 in 5 consumers are adding more protein, and launches featuring protein + at least one health claim have grown 32%. Bars and RTDs continue to expand, driven by consumers who want performance without heaviness. Clear formats stand out — clear whey powders and RTDs are surging, with top flavor families like Berry & Summer Fruit, Pink Lemonade, Tropical Escape, and Citrus. Pink Lemonade and Tropical Escape emerge as whitespace with high appeal and low saturation, and younger shoppers show a stronger pull toward citrus-led profiles.

Why it matters:

Protein innovation must deliver clarity, lightness, and a clean sensory experience — across powders, RTDs, bars, and emerging carbonated protein concepts.



BOOSTED BEVERAGES

PILLAR TWO

Consumers increasingly view beverages as a primary route to wellness — 51% say they are drinking more because beverages "are healthy." The top purchase cues remain:

- Low/No Sugar (23%)
- Natural/Real (23%)
- Protein (13%), and
- Functional Ingredients (12%).

Prebiotics lead the next wave of functional add-ins: prebiotic carbonates and energy drinks grew 51% (CAGR) from 2020–2025. Clear protein drinks, dairy-based functional beverages, and "soda-with-benefits" formats reflect growing demand for health-forward convenience.

Why it matters:

Boosted beverages must balance function and refreshment — favoring fruit-forward, light flavors and claim stacks that reinforce health without heaviness.

Gut Health

Natural Ingredients

Fruit Forward

WELLNESS UNLOCKED

PILLAR THREE

Wellness priorities expand beyond immune support into gut health, healthy aging, daily energy, and mental wellbeing. 59% of consumers say gut health is very important, and gut/digestive launches rose 42% YoY.

Greens are a standout growth engine: US revenue climbed to $222M, with powders leading and kids' greens gaining traction, though flavors for children remain open whitespace. Berry-led families dominate, and Strawberry-Kiwi leads in retail performance.

Why it matters:

Wellness innovation should prioritize gut-friendly systems, approachable fruit flavors, and formats that make daily routines easier — especially greens and kid-forward solutions.







CONCLUSION

Nutrition is evolving into a category defined by precision and practicality. Consumers want benefits that are relevant and immediate — lighter protein, functional beverages that deliver without excess sugar, and wellness solutions that support gut health, energy, and long-term vitality. These expectations reinforce the importance of the three pillars outlined in this report: **Protein Upgrade, Boosted Beverages, and Wellness Unlocked**.

The data is clear: protein claims continue to drive purchases, prebiotic beverages are accelerating, and greens — especially kid-friendly formats — are becoming a meaningful part of wellness routines. As claim priorities shift and flavor families evolve, success will hinge on creating products that are not only functional but enjoyable, convenient, and aligned with everyday lifestyles.

In 2026 and beyond, brands that simplify choices, elevate sensory experience, and deliver benefits that feel personal — not generic — will define the next generation of nutrition.

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Protein Upgraded, Boosted Beverages & Wellness Unlocked

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