Nutrition and gut health can play an important role in strengthening the immune system, a fact confirmed by patent activity.
Report Content

• At a glance
• Mintel’s perspective

WHAT CONSUMERS WANT AND WHY
• Consumers desire food and drink products with immune health benefits
• US consumers from all generations agree that immune health is a higher priority for them since the pandemic started
  - Graph 1: consumer priority changes towards strengthening their immune system since January 2021, 2021

PRODUCT INNOVATION TRENDS
• Immunity claims show signs of growth in some categories
  - Graph 2: % of launches with an immune system claim, by selected sub-categories and date, 2020-22
• Launches with immune health claims use a variety of ingredients and formats

THE PATENT LANDSCAPE
• Patents related to immune-health-improving food and drink continue to grow
  - Graph 3: patents related to immune-health-improving food and drinks, published each year, 2013-22
• China and South Korea have the majority of granted patents related to immunity-boosting ingredients and products
• Asian universities and research institutes dominate immune-health-related granted patents
  - Graph 4: top 10 organisations with granted patent families for food and drink with immune health support properties, 2023

Explore next-generation immunity in VMS
• Consumers seek VMS to support their immune health
• Chinese consumers associate a range of ingredients with immune health
  - Graph 5: consumer perception of nutrients associated with immunity, 2020
• A higher percentage of VMS launches feature an immune health claim than any other health claim
  - Graph 6: % of vitamin, mineral and dietary supplement sub-category launches with health claims, 2020-22
• Patents take inspiration from traditional medicine systems like Ayurveda for immune health
• Medicinal mushrooms are promoted for their immune health benefits
• Patents discuss the multiple ways in which micronutrients benefit the immune system

Optimise protein intake to support immunity
• Some consumers associate protein with immune health
• Chinese consumers link protein-rich foods with immune health
- Graph 7: protein foods consumers associate with immune health, 2022
  • Algae could emerge as an alternative protein that also supports immune health
  • Link protein-rich food and drink with a healthy immune system
  • Low-phosphorus protein could fulfill the protein need of consumers with kidney disease

Enhance immunity via the gut-immune axis
  • Consumers link gut health and probiotics with immunity
  • Look for gut-microbiome-improving ingredients to support immune health
  • Companies are exploring a variety of ingredients that improve immune health via the gut-immune axis
  • Consider fortifying foods with ingredients that support immune health such as probiotics

THE IMPLICATION
  • Link total nutrition and gut health with a strong immune system

APPENDIX
  • Research methodology
  • Key examples of patents related to immune-health-improving ingredients
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  • Shape your future with Mintel bespoke patent analysis