

Dual wellness

Women's health is not just an issue for women; it's an issue for society as a whole. In addition to being influential consumers, research indicates that when women are healthier, communities are more productive and well-educated. Addressing women's unique health needs contributes to the vitality of these communities, fosters stronger families and more resilient societies. In the first half of this feature, *FoodBev* unveils some of the solutions propelling us towards a more inclusive health platform for women.

The gender health gap is not a novel issue, as disparities in healthcare have garnered considerable attention in recent years. In 2016, the World Health Organization revealed that despite women in the EU outliving men, a significant portion of their lives is spent in poor health. While these findings generated widespread awareness, they fell short of catalysing the necessary momentum for substantial, impactful changes that prioritise women's health.

That said, the women's health arena is undergoing a dynamic transformation, driven by targeted nutrition solutions. A surge in clinical research has paved the way for innovative food, beverage and supplement launches that are formulated to cater to women's unique needs, such as sexual health, hormonal balance, fertility, breastfeeding and menopause.

Beyond its health impact, this is a lucrative business opportunity. The market is awakening to the untapped potential of women-centric health solutions.

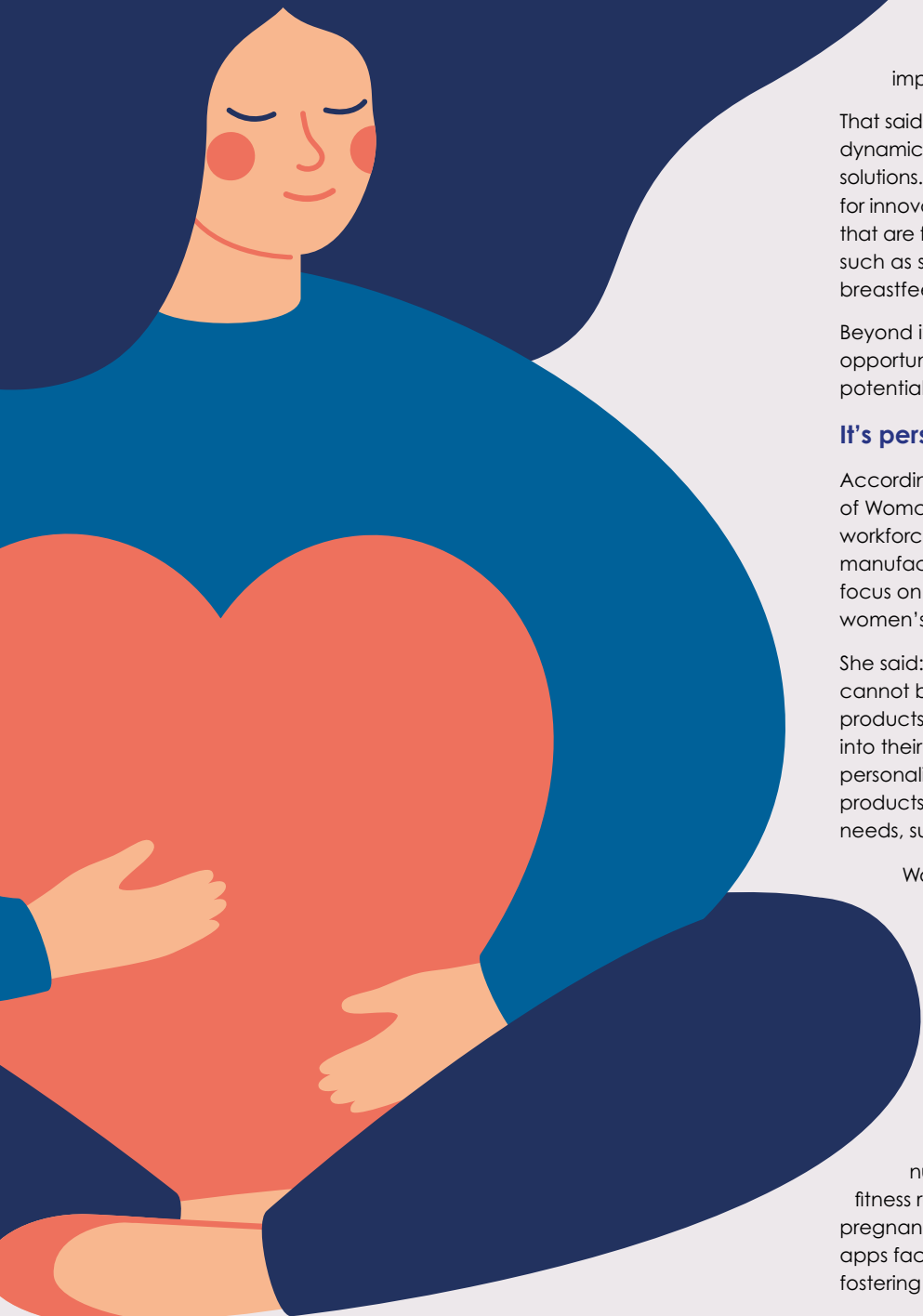
It's personal

According to Micol Hafez, co-founder and CPO of *Womco* – a health app that supports the female workforce with digital hormonal health care – manufacturers looking to corner this market should focus on developing a deeper understanding of women's distinct health needs.

She said: "The combination of nutrition and convenience cannot be overstated. Women are looking for health products that are not just beneficial but also fit seamlessly into their busy lives. There's also a growing trend towards personalised nutrition. Women are increasingly seeking products tailored to their individual health goals and needs, such as supporting hormonal balance."

Womco's approach is data-driven, as Hafez explained: "We gather detailed information unique to each individual through precision testing and consultations. This enables us to provide personalised nutrition plans that are finely tuned to each user's specific needs."

By combining technology, data analysis and user engagement, health apps such as *Womco* empower women with personalised nutrition plans, menstrual cycle tracking and fitness routines. Specialised features can also support pregnancy, postpartum care and mental health. These apps facilitate nutrient and calorie monitoring while fostering virtual communities for shared experiences.



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Functional formats

Beyond digital, Benny Antony, joint managing director at Arjuna Natural, told *FoodBev* that formulating products with functional ingredients proven to benefit women's health, such as omega-3 fatty acids and botanical extracts, should be a priority.

He added: "Marketing strategies should highlight inclusivity, leveraging diverse representations and narratives. Offering a range of convenient and palatable formats, along with clear labelling and messaging, enhances accessibility. Collaboration with healthcare professionals and continuous adaptation to evolving trends ensures F&B manufacturers stay at the forefront of providing comprehensive and tailored solutions for women's wellbeing."

Arjuna's Rhuleave-K is a natural pain relief formula designed for women experiencing menstrual cramps, containing natural bioactives such as from turmeric and Boswellia. The formula is manufactured using the company's proprietary Speedtech Technology, which employs a unique matrix formula, ensuring precise dosage and fast action through uniform component distribution.

Demonstrated as safe even at elevated dosages, Rhuleave-K boasts synergistic antioxidant activity. Supported by scientific documentation and clinical data, its efficacy in providing immediate pain relief is comparable to acetaminophen (paracetamol).

In the delivery

"F&B manufacturers should look for companies that specialise in delivery technologies to expand format breadth and ingredient offerings," said Mariko Hill, global innovation manager at Gencor Pacific. "By partnering with Pharmako Biotechnologies, many of Gencor's ingredients can be used in a wide range of products, such as Levagen+ – a cold-water dispersible form of PEA (palmitoylethanolamide) that can be used in powders, gels, sprays, tinctures and gummies".

Derived naturally, PEA is a fatty acid amide that is lipophilic (soluble in fat and non-polar solvents) and is found in foods and the body. It influences the endocannabinoid system and is therefore considered a safe alternative to CBD.

"Lipophilic compounds typically are restricted to capsules and tablets; however, with the advancement of dispersion technology such as LipiSpense, these can now be incorporated into cold-water dispersible powders," Hill explained. "This enables manufacturers to include those functional ingredients that were once unable to be used to create unique product offerings."

Meanwhile, Gencor's Libifem is a fenugreek extract backed by clinical evidence for its potential in supporting

sexual health, increased libido and for managing menopausal symptoms. Its saponin-rich composition promotes healthy oestradiol levels, contributing to sexual vitality and addressing some menopausal discomfort.

Endo game

Conor Kerley, founder and CSO of Phytaphix, developed EndoHormone Phix after speaking at an endometriosis conference about nutrition. "I was shocked at how common, severe and neglected endometriosis was and still is; however, I was encouraged by my findings and knew I had to try to help."

EndoHormone Phix helps regulate hormonal activity, and supports normal inflammation response, cell division and fertility. It contains 17 nutrients, including: Irish seaweed complex with bladderwrack and alaria, Boswellic acid, bromelain, curcuminoids, ginger, n-acetyl L-cysteine, PEA, piperine (an alkaloid found in black pepper, known to increase absorption of plant compounds by up to 2000%), silymarin (milk thistle), quercetin, polyphenol-flavonoids, zinc, methyltetrahydrofolate (a form of folic acid that is more than two times more bioavailable than standard types), and vitamins B5, B6, C and D.

"We are also working on nutrition solutions for polycystic ovary syndrome and female fertility," Kerley added. "We are primarily a food supplement company but are always interested in partnerships with innovative food and drink companies."

Iron age

Isabel Gómez, global marketing manager for nutraceuticals at Lubrizol Life Science, noted that women have specific iron requirements that may change throughout their lives due to factors such as puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, lactation and menopause.

"Based on our proprietary research findings, consumers are eager to find a product that is easy to digest, does not cause stomach upset or constipation, and does not have an unpleasant aroma or flavour," she added. "To support this, we developed Lipofer, a micronized and microencapsulated iron source explicitly designed to reduce iron's reactivity in the mouth and digestive tract while delivering a fully absorbable mineral that is significantly easier and pleasant to digest."

Women's health needs are complex. Companies are now tasked with revolutionising this arena with inclusive formulations, transparent sourcing and universal accessibility. Tailored marketing, education, diverse flavours/formats and collaboration with healthcare professionals for affordability and representation are essential for creating an empowering, inclusive environment that celebrates women's health needs. ▶

Dual wellness

The growing emphasis on women's health in the F&B sector has sparked concerns about potential oversight in men's health. While initiatives addressing women's health challenges are crucial, there's a notable scarcity of products targeting men's wellness needs. The challenge lies in defining and understanding men's health to better fill the gap in the market. The current focus primarily centres on sexual health products, highlighting a broader societal attitude towards men's health that warrants increased attention in both product development and marketing strategies. *FoodBev* explores.

"Women's health has historically faced societal and economic challenges, warranting dedicated attention," noted Radhika Ganesan, chief operating officer at the Food Research Lab, a unit of global contract research organisation Guires. "However, in contrast, men's health – which is equally complex and multifaceted – seems to have been overshadowed."

She added: "The challenge partly lies in defining what constitutes men's health needs, which are often less discussed and understood compared to women's health. This has resulted in a market where products specifically designed for men's health are notably scarce."

Based in Chennai, India, the Food Research Lab specialises in crafting tailored men's health products that address areas such as prostate health with fruit extracts, herbal solutions and arousal enhancements. Healthier alternatives, like non-alcoholic drinks, are also part of the lab's offerings, as well as chocolate, powders, gummies and supplements, crafted by a dedicated R&D team ensuring safety and effectiveness through precise raw material selection and formulation.

"Food Research Lab plays a crucial role in every phase, overseeing product development and material selection, and conducting quality checks based on Certificates of Analysis (COA)," explained Ganesan. "Our well-equipped lab fosters innovation across various domains, with facilities dedicated to developing new flavours, microbiomes, supplements, powders, snacks and beverages."

John Kathrein, national sales director at Applied Food Sciences, told *FoodBev*: "Traditionally, F&B products are often marketed towards younger men with sugary drinks, junk food or unhealthy nostalgia/licensing deals. These products typically include highly processed, synthetic ingredients and a complicated ingredient list. Many men are ageing out of the products they have been consuming since childhood. They seek healthier, more sophisticated options with maturing tastes and preferences."

He continued: "Manufacturers should prioritise adult options that authentically elevate health, performance and refined palates. Meeting this standard involves opting for healthier ingredients and clean labels with minimal synthetic components. Additionally, incorporating

ingredients that introduce a more sophisticated or globally inspired flavour, like herbs and spices, could captivate the interest of a maturing generation."

There is a notable evolution fuelled by tailored nutritional solutions that address aspects like sexual wellbeing and prostate health, presenting a significant opportunity as the market recognises the untapped potential in men-centric health solutions.

Natural and nutraceutical

Nutraceutical companies are adapting to evolving health needs by creating customised product lines that address diverse nutrient requirements. This heightened focus on men's health mirrors an increasing awareness and demand for more inclusive and targeted offerings.

Cambert-owned nutrition brand, Kordel's, is dedicated to "innovation and in-depth studies to address men's overall health concerns," Ignatius Lok, marketing specialist at Cambert, said.

Kordel's Testofen Plus Ashwagandha and Panax Ginseng – a plant-based formula designed to support testosterone levels naturally – incorporates patented ingredients like Testofen from fenugreek extract and ashwagandha root extract (KSM-66) for physical wellbeing and stress resilience, complemented by panax ginseng for overall body toning.





Also from Kordel's, Prostate Health is a comprehensive blend with standardised saw palmetto, tomato extracts, flaxseed oil and pumpkin seed oil for consistent prostate support. Backed by research, it shows potential in reducing prostate size and mitigating urinary symptoms, contributing to better prostate health and enhanced urinary tract function.

Healthcare provider Chereso (Chemical Resources), specialises in the production of natural ingredients for the food, beverage and supplement sectors. "We are innovating in the men's health space with Furosap (enriched with 20% protodioscin), a health supplement that is clinically proven and patented and targets a range of men's health issues," said a spokesperson for Chereso.

Furosap is a natural supplement known for its potential to promote healthy testosterone levels. Derived from a proprietary extract of *Trigonella foenum-graecum* (fenugreek), it offers benefits such as enhanced overall immunity, improved blood circulation, stamina, vigour and fatigue management.

The supplement operates by supporting hormonal balance through enhanced adrenal gland function and testosterone production. It serves as a comprehensive option for various men's health goals, with no reported side effects. Clinically evaluated, Furosap ensures a consistent concentration of protodioscin.

Meanwhile, Indus Biotech is a producer of speciality bioactives for food chain biomasses. "Over 29 years, we have developed more than 222 global patents – most of which are centred around men's health – from testosterone to improving metabolic health," Prasad Thakurdesai, the company's chief scientific officer, told *FoodBev*.

He continued: "For example, Testosurge is a highly researched bioactive ingredient aimed at increasing free and bioavailable testosterone in your body, naturally. Backed by two double blind placebo control clinical studies (gold standard), Testosurge improves and optimises the body's natural levels of testosterone, thus providing the natural way to create, promote and maintain a healthy physiological environment in your body to maximise health."

More than skin deep

More independent brands have started creating health and wellness products aimed at men, "because they too are motivated to look and feel good," said Johanna Ward, founder of ZENli – a wellness brand that focuses on creating high-quality supplements, nutrition and skincare products to promote overall health and wellbeing.

"Collagen is a vital inclusion in men's diets due to its role in supporting joint health, muscle recovery and overall skin elasticity," Ward explained. "Collagen is not just a beauty molecule. It's a vitally important full body-supporting protein that depletes as we age. Therefore,

it's essential to develop a product tailored for men, offering a robust 10,000mg dosage of collagen alongside high-performance co-factor ingredients."

ZENli's ProCollagen Max, which it claims is the "world's first" collagen drink for men, caters specifically to men's nutritional needs, offering a potent blend backed by clinical studies. "It's an intelligent collagen blend with powerful co-ingredients, including all recommended daily vitamins and minerals such as magnesium and zinc, hyaluronic acid, green tea and aloe vera," Ward added.

"Its formulation is designed to promote not just skin health but also support joint health, muscle recovery, gut health, flexibility, thicker hair and nails, and skin elasticity."

F&B companies must provide distinctive products tailored to men that offer tangible benefits. In a market saturated with commonplace items, the demand for functional products with genuine health claims is escalating. Brands should prioritise quality ingredients and address concerns like sexual vitality, low testosterone and metabolic health without compromise.

"The movement towards healthier living is significant for everyone, and there's a substantial opportunity to enhance the spotlight on men's health," Food Research Lab's Ganesan concluded. "It's time for the F&B industry to equally prioritise men's health, bridging a gap in the market and contributing to a society where the health needs of everyone are acknowledged and addressed." ●



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