

Supporting *Women's Health* at Every Life Stage

Industry experts weigh in on the strategies and supplements that can help your customers stay ahead of top health concerns and combat effects of aging. By Jennifer Joseph



Now, perhaps more than ever before, women are prioritizing their health and well-being—and looking to nutritional supplements for a helping hand to help them stay energized and active. “COVID-19 created the awareness that health, wellness, and a physically active lifestyle are preventative tools for better care, and that the consumption of vitamins and minerals are an added value to those foundational changes,” says Trisha Sugarek MacDonald, BS, MS, Sr. Director of Research & Development, Bluebonnet Nutrition Corporation. “Self-care is important, and women are now more focused on implementing mental, social, emotional, and nutritional care throughout their lifespan for daily wellness and long-term support.”

In addition to nutritional support for overall well-being, research is also beginning to shine a brighter light on specific health issues that only women face, as well as those that impact women more significantly than men, notes Jacqueline Rizo, Digital Engagement & Communications Specialist at Stratum Nutrition. “Women experience unique health issues and concerns, from pregnancy and menopause to gynecological conditions, such as uterine fibroids and pelvic floor disorders. What’s more, men and women may have the same condition, but the effects are different when it comes to women. For example, women are more likely to die following a heart attack than men. Women are more likely to show signs of depression and anxiety than men. Osteoarthritis affects more women than men. And women are more likely to have urinary tract problems due to the way the female urinary tract is structured.”

“Historically, more doctors and researchers were males and research would typically focus on male issues,” adds Tracey Seipel, N.D., CEO and Formulator of Siepel Group. “Even medical research was largely conducted on males and the findings don’t always translate across to women with the

\$47.8B
expected size of
the global women’s
health market by
2027

same disease. The voices of women weren’t as loud and women’s health concerns were less of a priority. What we are now seeing is that conditions that predominantly affect women are lagging in medical treatment options. This is also visible in the dietary supplement space.” (For more on this topic, watch *NutraViews: Lack of Female Representation in Research—Problems & Solutions* on www.WholeFoodsMagazine.com.)

Today, science into solutions to pressing female health concerns is gaining traction. As researchers work to correct disparities and identify more preventative and curative solutions to female-centric concerns, this category is poised to see expansive growth. But retailers don’t need to wait for innovations to benefit from growing interest in the category. “According to Grand View Research, the global women’s health market size is expected to reach \$47.8 billion by 2027,” notes Rizo. “Growing awareness among women regarding nutritional requirements along with increasing consumer willingness to spend on health and beauty supplements is anticipated to drive the market expansion.”

Retailers looking to capitalize on growth in this space will likely find success by looking for ways to appeal to the specific nutritional needs at each life stage. “Women’s health needs vary throughout each decade of life, but a constant is a universal desire to feel as well as possible at every age to be able to meet daily life challenges,” says Tim Hammond, Vice President of Sales & Marketing, Bergstrom Nutrition. “While younger women may seek to take a proactive approach to minimize the effects of aging, both middle- and mature-aged women look to maintain hormonal balances and slow muscle, bone, and joint decline rates.”

Cultivating a loyal customer during one life stage can help ensure that customer will turn to your business for support as her nutritional needs change and evolve over time. Read on for a look at top needs for women through the years.

The Child-Bearing Years: Health Concerns During the 20s & 30s

Women in this age group are primed to be good customers, asserts Collette Kakuk, VP of Global Marketing for Layn Natural Ingredients. "According to the last U.S. Census, millennials are now the largest living adult generation in the nation and have surpassed the number of baby boomers. These women do their research and want to feel confident that any supplement they take will actually provide them with the benefits they need. Younger women have also gained a new perspective on health and wellness, and are more proactive than ever in taking steps to preserve wellness, activity, and mental health throughout life." Top concerns include:

Vaginal Health: "Women's reproductive and urologic health depend on healthy bacteria," notes Neil Edward Levin, CCB, DANLA, NOW Senior Nutrition Education Manager. "Lactobacilli are major constituents of the normal flora of the vagina and urinary tract—particularly *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *Lactobacillus casei*—which provide protection against colonization by undesirable organisms. They do this via their production of bacteriocins, lactic acid, and hydrogen peroxide to regulate their environment to be beneficial for vaginal health maintenance." NOW offers a Women's Probiotic that is specially formulated using three clinically tested probiotic strains to support women's health. "This product features *L. rhamnosus* HN001 and *L. acidophilus* La-14, which have been shown to colonize the vaginal tract and help to maintain healthy vaginal pH when taken orally," Levin explains. "Both the *B. lactis* HN019 and HN001 strains may help to support healthy immune system function in pregnant and nursing women."

Menstruation and PMS: Most women suffer some degree of cramping, bloating, and/or headaches before or during their period—and these frustrating symptoms can reduce their quality of life for several days each month. One solution: "Taking magnesium orally may relieve symptoms of PMS," notes Levin. "There is some evidence that magnesium supplementation can improve symptoms, including mood changes and fluid retention in some women."

The French maritime pine bark extract Pycnogenol also has been shown to have benefits. "One study showed treatment with Pycnogenol lowered pain during menstruation, which was reflected by a significant reduction of NSAIDs used," says Franziska Weichmann, Manager of Scientific Communications and Product Development at Horphag Research. What's more, she adds, Pycnogenol can help prevent another top concern in this age group: urinary tract infections (UTIs). "A 2021 study found Pycnogenol to be effective at reducing the number of urinary tract infection episodes, increasing the number of infection-free and symptom-free patients, and decreasing oxidative stress in patients with urinary tract infections."

Fertility: "Pre/post-natal care and fertility become increasingly important as many women are trying to conceive," says Danna Pratte, Founder and CEO of NB Pure. A good prenatal multi can be a good place to start, but the quality of the formulations is key. "Prenatal vitamins will vary in how much of the essential nutrients are in it, especially the macrominerals calcium and magnesium," says Levin. "DHA is another good example; it may not be in most prenatal vitamins but the mother needs to get it from somewhere. If not fish oil, then an algae source is recommended to enhance the development of the child's brain and nerves." NOW's Prenatal Gels + DHA provides 250 mg of DHA to support a child's neuronal development.

"Vitamin D is also a must," adds Pratte. "It's important for general health but also has fertility benefits. Vitamin D can help with ovarian stimulation in women and can improve semen quality in men. NBPure Vitamin D spray is an easy way to get your daily dose of D."

Folate is also a critical nutrient for those who are pregnant or who may become pregnant, but not all formulations are equally

effective. "Folate plays an essential role in human growth and development. It contributes to maternal tissue growth during pregnancy," says Kate Quackenbush, Communications Director, Gnosis by Lesaffre. However, most prenatal vitamins provide this nutrient as folic acid, which is poorly utilized by the body. A better bet, according to Quackenbush: Formulas that include the branded ingredient Quatrefolic, a bioactive form of folate that can be used immediately without any kind of metabolization. This ingredient can be especially beneficial for infertile women undergoing Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART). "Quatrefolic can make a difference, bypassing folate metabolism disturbances, improving fertility, and increasing the success rates in infertility treatment," says Quackenbush. "Quatrefolic helps maintain sufficient levels of folate during pregnancy, lowering the risk of neural tube defects and congenital disabilities." She points to a recent study in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* showing that women undergoing ART who supplemented with a B-vitamin complex that included Quatrefolic had a higher chance of clinical pregnancy and live birth than those supplementing with folic acid alone.

Another option comes from NB Pure, which offers a Methylfolate Spray as a safe, natural, absorbable form of folate.

Stress Support: It goes without saying that women carry a lot of stress, and that stress can take a toll on health over time. "Research shows that chronic stress inhibits HPA axis function and hormone regulation, increases cortisol levels, interferes with sleep, promotes inflammation, and increases the risk of depression, anxiety, hypertension, metabolic syndrome, weight gain and immune depletion," says David Winston RH (AHG), Founder and President of Herbalist & Alchemist. To help combat harmful effects of stress, Herbalist & Alchemist offers Women's Adapt, which includes the adaptogens Shatavari and red ginseng. "It's designed for women who are fatigued, experiencing yin deficiency such as dryness, depression, brain fog, and hormonal imbalance," Winston says.

Also pointing to the benefits of adaptogens, Kakuk notes that they play a role in reversing the adverse effects of physical and mental stressors and work to bring the body back into a more balanced state. "Adaptogens enable the body to adjust to the vicissitudes of everyday living by keeping the body in balance," she explains. Her recommendations: "Rhodiola has been shown to reduce general fatigue under stressful conditions. Schisandra has a long history of supporting healthy mood. And Holy Basil (Tulsi) is shown to help manage healthy stress response and improve symptoms of anxiety."

Bluebonnet's Stress Relief Vegetable Capsules also draw on the power of adaptogens, with a formulation that includes ashwagandha, Siberian eleuthero root, passionflower, rhodiola rosea, holy basil, and lemon balm, says Sugarek-MacDonald. "Plus, it contains the amino acid derivative L-theanine to help the body and mind adapt and cope with occasional stressors while promoting an overall sense of relaxation."

Omega-3 fatty acids, particularly eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), have also been shown to be beneficial in helping women manage stress and improve mood, says functional nutritionist Pauline Cox BSc MSc, owner of Sow & Arrow. She cautions that many women on a plant-based diet miss out on these important benefits because plant-based sources of omega-3 fatty acids, such as flax and linseed oils contain ALA fatty acids, which need to be converted to EPA in order to provide support for brain health and mood. "The conversion rate of ALA to EPA is often low, leaving vegetarians, vegans, and those who do not consume fish or fish oils, potentially low in beneficial EPA," cautions Cox. "However, the seed oil of ahiflower has a much higher conversion rate of EPA due to its fatty acid composition, making it an ideal health supplement for those looking to support healthy inflammation response and support healthy mood."

Another boon of ahiflower: It provides the omega-6 fatty acids gamma linolenic acid (GLA), adds Rizo. "Unlike fish and

3 TRENDS TO WATCH IN WOMEN'S SUPPLEMENTS

Women are looking for more targeted supplements that cater to them specifically. "They are seeking personalized products that are convenient, healthy, and that take their special needs into account," asserts Stratum's Rizo. In addition to personalization, female consumers are looking for the following traits in supplements:

1) Fresh Delivery Formats: Many consumers have reached pill fatigue, "especially if they take pharmaceutical products in addition to their supplements," notes Rizo. "As a result, the current trend of more food-like formats such as chews and gummies will continue to be popular." Kakuk also sees alternative methods of delivery growing. "We're beginning to see a younger population gravitate more towards supplementation partially due to all new delivery formats—from functional foods, beverages, bars and gummies, to dermal patches and topical applications."

2) Multitasking Formulations: "We're seeing an increased interest in finding one supplement that aids multiple whole-health needs," says Hammond, noting that OptiMSM is an ingredient that fits this bill. "OptiMSM is rich in sulfur—a critical mineral needed to support and preserve connective tissue. It's effective in enhancing overall muscle, ligament, skin, bone and joint health. We are particularly excited to see products hitting the shelves that combine OptiMSM with collagen and its inclusion in products with hyaluronic acid and natural substances such as curcumin, boswellia, and ashwagandha."

Pycnogenol is another ingredient that can carry women through all life stages thanks to its multifaceted benefits, says Weichmann. "Pycnogenol is one of the leading ingredients for women's health supported by a vast catalog of research demonstrating benefits for healthy aging, cognitive function, skin health, venous health, reduction of menstrual discomfort, urinary tract infections and management of endometriosis, perimenopause and menopause." Other formulations that pair standardized ingredients to deliver multiple benefits will also win big.

3) Sustainability + Clean Label: "Sustainable, clean-label ingredients are almost a requirement now, and consumers are loyal to brands that are socially responsible, using traceable ingredients with assurance that they are authentic and handled fairly and properly throughout the supply chain," says Kakuk. Transparency in ingredient sourcing as well as the inclusion of branded ingredients with proven efficacy can also help drive interest and sales.



flax, ahiflower contains GLA, which is associated with skin health, hormonal balance, and support for a healthy inflammatory response. GLA is a very special essential fatty acid for beautiful skin and much more."

Navigating Perimenopause: Supporting Hormone Balance through the 40s

"As women enter their 40s, there is a window of opportunity to create a smooth transition from perimenopause into menopause," notes Cox. "This is often a time women fear, having heard the negative portrayal of menopause and all it has to offer. But we can help support the transition with proper nutrition and supplementation."

Hormone Balance: Cox notes that women's hormones begin to change from the late 30s to early 40s, with a natural increase in insulin. "This increase in insulin can see women gain weight, change shape, and start to notice more aches and pains due to increasing levels of inflammation and lower levels of estrogen." To help balance insulin levels, Cox advises adopting a healthy, Mediterranean-style diet, rich in brightly colored and starchy vegetables, quality protein, and healthy fats to help retain lean muscle mass and promote hormonal health.

Adaptogens and other herbal remedies can also be useful in bringing hormones back into balance during this life stage, says Winston. "Our Women's Calmpound helps restore emotional balance, especially with women suffering from PMS irritability or peri-menopausal anxiety. The formula includes Chaste tree, which in human studies has been found to reduce both PMS and peri-menopausal symptoms, particularly emotional ones, along with the anxiolytic and nervine herbs Motherwort, Skullcap, Blue Vervain, and Pulsatilla."

Sexual Health: "Libido is an often overlooked and 'taboo' subject when it comes to talking about women's needs, but it's important," says Mariko Hill, Global Innovation Manager for Gencor. "Libido can fluctuate as one ages. There are several factors that can influence this such as hormone levels, body fat percentage, and mood. Hence ingredients that can help support libido are of interest." Hill notes that Gencor's branded ingredient Libifem, a standardized extract of fenugreek, has been shown to significantly increase libido (and help curb menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes and night sweats), especially in perimenopausal and menopausal women. "A recently completed study on Libifem also showed its ability to enhance muscle mass and strength," says Hill. That's key as "muscle mass can be a surrogate measure of health as one ages, helping to prevent sarcopenia and frailty."

Vaginal dryness can also be an issue in this age group, but herbal formulations, such as Herbal & Alchemist's Replenish Compound, may offer relief. "Our Replenish Compound has Fresh Milky Oat, which was used by the Eclectic Physicians in 1830-1940s, to enhance sexual performance in women and men," explains Winston. "It also has the classic Ayurvedic female reproductive tonic, Shatavari, which moistens dry tissue, augments hormonal levels, and supports healthy sexual functioning. Plus it contains licorice, which helps to balance hormonal levels, and Dong Quai to promote pelvic circulation and vaginal tissue cornification."

Aging Skin, Muscles & Joints: "Women love to feel beautiful both on the inside and on the outside. The division of nutraceuticals—ingestible products taken specifically for beauty purposes—has taken off in recent years. In fact, the U.S. beauty supplement market grew by 61%, from \$89M to \$144M from 2017 to 2018," notes Sugarek-MacDonald. That's why Bluebonnet developed their Beauty Ally line, which works to support beauty from within. "Each formula in the line delivers superior nutrition at scientifically relevant potencies that thoroughly nourish hair, skin and nails. These groundbreaking formulas deliver beauty nutrients like collagen peptides, keratin, biotin, hyaluronic acid, vitamin C and zinc."

SPOTLIGHT ON BLADDER HEALTH

"Urinary health is trending in the dietary supplement space and it is about time," says Tracey Seipel, ND. She notes that bladder issues affect females from early childhood with bedwetting and incontinence to early 20s with UTIs, post-partum incontinence, and follow women all the way through to post-menopause. "The nature of urinary bladder concerns is that they occur more often and earlier in women than in men," Dr. Seipel explains. "This is in part due to the anatomy of the female urinary system, the shorter the urinary outflow tube called the urethra and also weakening of the pelvic floor and bladder during pregnancy and childbirth and post-menopause. Women who have more pregnancies generally have more bladder problems."

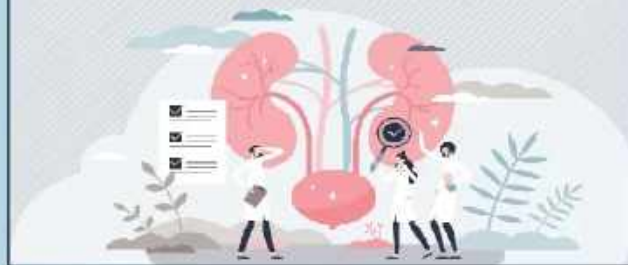
Dr. Seipel notes that these issues are shockingly common: "Data shows 60% of women will have one UTI in their lifetime, and 11% women experience chronic UTIs, meaning suffering at least four UTIs per year, with chronic UTIs increasing to 20% of women over 65 years." Also concerning: "NIH data shows that over 50 million American women have urinary incontinence—and the National Association for Continence states that more than half of these women experience incontinence daily."

The embarrassing nature of bladder issues means they often go undiscussed and often untreated. "Half of sufferers don't tell their doctor or even their partner, and these issues significantly reduce quality of life," asserts Dr. Seipel.

Fortunately, there are preventative strategies women can take to help protect their bladder health and reduce incidences of UTIs. "The best advice I can give women as they move through each decade of their life is to think more about their bladder and to act earlier," says Dr. Seipel. "Supplementation can improve bladder health at each life stage and I encourage women to not wait until their bladder is controlling their life before making bladder supplementation part of their daily regime."

One option: Urox, a proprietary blend of cratevox, horsetail, and lindera herbal extracts from Seipel Group. "Urox is the only herbal globally with published placebo-controlled research to show it is effective for urinary incontinence, overactive bladder and bedwetting," says Dr. Seipel. "Urox is also effective in reducing bladder oversensitivity that develops with recurring UTI and cystitis."

Other bladder support options include d-mannose (a natural sugar that prevents bacteria from sticking to bladder walls) and cranberry fruit extract (its anthocyanins reduce bacteria's ability to adhere to the bladder). Bluebonnet's Targeted Choice Urinary Tract Support Vegetable Capsules deliver both along with immune-boosting vitamin C, says Sugarek-MacDonald. "This soothing maintenance formula helps support a healthy urinary tract by flushing out undesirable microbes and providing a nourishing environment for healthy flora to thrive."



Cox also sees growth potential for products featuring collagen. "Collagen supplementation has been growing in popularity for its beneficial effects on wound healing and skin aging. Oral collagen supplementation has been shown to increase skin elasticity, hydration and collagen density," notes Cox. Hammond adds that collagen can offer a buffer against age-related degeneration in muscles and joints. "Collagen is the most abundant protein in the body," he says. "It is the main component of connective tissues that make up several body parts, including tendons, ligaments, skin, and muscles. Collagen has many important functions, including providing skin with structure and strengthening bones." (For more on collagen, see *Naturally Informed Education: Collagen Needs Throughout Life* on page 31).

For customers looking for topical treatments, progesterone creams have been used by women seeking to maintain their skin's youth and vitality, adds Levin. He notes that NOW offers a Progesterone Liposomal Skin Cream that supplies 20mg of progesterone USP derived from wild yam per metered pump.

Sleep: Sleep disturbances are common among women in their 40s and many reach for melatonin for help getting a good night's sleep. And for customers who prefer sleep assistance without melatonin, there are alternatives like NB Pure Power Down, adds Pratte. "Natural sleep supplements with ingredients like magnolia bark extract, chamomile and ashwagandha can help."

Menopause & Beyond: Combating Age-Related Issues in the 50s+

"During the 50s is when many women begin to enter menopause, so there's more focus on hormonal health, because so much of our health is tied to our hormones," notes Pratte. "Loss of muscle and bone density is also an issue. It becomes increasingly difficult to gain and retain muscle."

Menopause: "The prevalence of menopause symptoms varies geographically, indicating potential genetic expressions and environmental differences. For example, it has long been stated that in some Asian countries the women experience significantly fewer side effects," notes Levin. This phenomenon has been largely credited to the prevalence of phytoestrogen-rich soy in their diets. "Additionally, some botanicals seem to work despite not containing natural phytoestrogens, demonstrating alternative methods of action," notes Levin. NOW Menopause Support is a soothing herbal blend that includes soy phytoestrogens along with some herbal remedies such as black cohosh to help reduce hot flashes, night sweats and other menopausal symptoms.

Winston also points to black cohosh as a frequently recommended option for hot flashes and night sweats, but says research shows this herb is only modestly effective on its own. "A much more effective herb for hot flashes and night sweats is Chaste Tree, which works via the pituitary, re-regulating FSH and LH levels," he says. "When combined with Black Cohosh, these two herbs are far superior to either by itself." Herbal & Alchemist's Women's Transition Compound combines these two herbs along with Fresh Oat "to relieve emotional irritation, anxiety and help reduce sleep disruption," and Dong Quai and Night Blooming Cereus to "enhance circulation and cardiac health."

Red Ginseng Root Extract is yet another beneficial herb. Koreselect Balance from Korean Ginseng Corp. contains this ginseng along with plant-based ingredients known in Asia to help relieve menopause symptoms, such as peony root extract and bamboo leaf extract. The formula also works to help improve circulation and focus.

The branded ingredient Pycnogenol also shows promise as a natural solution for menopause symptoms, offers Weichmann. "Pycnogenol is specifically shown to improve all menopausal

symptoms, including hot flashes and nightly sweating, menstrual problems, memory and concentration problems, anxiety, sleep problems, depression and others." As a bonus, Pycnogenol can help increase production of skin-moisturizing hyaluronic acid, which was shown to reduce skin fatigue by 30% and increase skin elasticity by 25%.

And don't forget about functional mushrooms. "Lion's mane is particularly helpful for women with menopausal symptoms, conveying a calming effect, improvements in sleep disturbance, anxiety, and hot flashes," says Cox. "Mushrooms are also able to interact and modulate our immune system with different mushrooms interacting in specific ways to improve different aspects of our health."

Bone Strength: "Lost bone mineral density can dramatically hinder a woman's ability to remain as active as they desire," says Hammond. "According to the National Institutes of Health, more than 200 million people currently suffer from osteoporosis. According to recent statistics from the International Osteoporosis Foundation, 1 in 3 women over the age of 50 will experience osteoporotic fractures in their lifetime."

Calcium is typically needed to fortify bone strength, but this mineral can be a catch-22 for post-menopausal women: Research shows that the body becomes less effective at ferrying calcium into the bones as

we age. As a result, excess calcium can build up in the arteries, leading to arterial hardening that harms the heart, cautions Jeff Lind, Executive Vice President of Synergia Life Sciences-US, which offers the branded ingredient MenaquinGold. "A 2010 meta-analysis published in the *British Journal of Medicine* found that calcium supplements in post-menopausal women can actually increase the risk of heart attack by roughly 31%."

That's where the importance of vitamin K2 comes in. "As women age, they need to make sure to support their bone health in a way that will also support their heart health, and they can do that by including vitamin K2," asserts Lind. "Vitamin K2 is responsible for removing calcium from the tissues and shuttling it back into the bone."

It does this by activating two K-dependent proteins, says Quackenbush of Gnosis by Lesaffre, which offers branded MenaQ7. "It activates osteocalcin, which binds calcium to the bone mineral matrix, and matrix gla protein, which inhibits calcium from depositing in arteries and soft tissues, where it can increase cardiovascular risks. Both proteins require vitamin K2 to activate them to ensure they perform their respective roles."

Kakuk adds that olive leaf extract can be another option for plant-based support for bone health.

Joint Support: "Decreased estrogen levels in postmenopausal women not only increases the risk for osteoporosis, but also the risk for osteoarthritis as well. Research shows supplements addressing joint health now account for approximately 4.5% of the U.S. supplement market," notes Rizo. One ingredient that shows promise in this area is Stratum Nutrition's partially hydrolyzed eggshell membrane ingredient NEM. A natural source of joint-nourishing collagen, glucosamine, chondroitin, hyaluronic acid, and calcium, NEM has been shown to significantly reduce the breakdown of joint cartilage and decrease pain and stiffness in arthritis patients in several clinical trials. "Supplementation with NEM has been shown to promote joint health specifically in post-menopausal women," affirms Rizo. "In fact, the combination of joint-supporting NEM and bone support nutraceuticals, such as ESC brand eggshell

calcium, present a new marketing opportunity for a valuable new product."

Hammond points to Bergstrom's OptiMSM, a branded form of methylsulfonylmethane (MSM), as another ingredient that can help protect the joints and help older women maintain their mobility. "MSM protects the body from oxidative damage by increasing the body's natural antioxidant capacity to neutralize damaging free radicals," he explains. "The decrease in inflammation and oxidative stress protects joints, helps the body recover from strenuous activity, boosts immunity, and helps users stay mobile, and live, look and age well."

Heart Health: "Heart health has been addressed as primarily a men's condition in terms of research and treatment development, but there is finally more emphasis on understanding heart health in women, specifically," says Lind. "Many of the problems associated with cardiovascular disease can be attributed to atherosclerosis, or the hardening and narrowing of the arteries, due to plaque build-up and vascular calcification.

Arterial calcification can lead to an increase in aortic stiffness, which increases systolic hypertension and can ultimately lead to congestive heart failure."

Vitamin K2 is one nutrient that can combat arterial hardening by reducing the amount of calcium in the tissue. A double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical

study of 244 postmenopausal women found that 180mcg of K2 as MK-7 daily for three years increased arterial elasticity and reduced age-related arterial stiffening.

Another helping hand for the heart to consider: Pycnogenol, says Weichmann. "A 2017 study found that perimenopausal women who supplemented with Pycnogenol saw a significant reduction of cardiovascular risk marker, homocysteine."

Cognitive Performance: "An estimated 13% of adults over the age of 60 report more frequent episodes of confusion and memory loss. And 5 million Americans over the age of 65 have Alzheimer's Disease—a condition characterized by dementia and loss of cognitive abilities," points out Sugarek-MacDonald. "But it's worth noting that brain health is not just a concern for aging individuals. In fact, it is among the top five health concerns of consumers aged 18 to 75."

To support cognitive function, Bluebonnet offers its Brain Power Vegetable Capsules formulated with bacopa, lion's mane, phosphatidylserine, and wild blueberries rich in anthocyanins have been shown to help boost memory and mental alertness, improve occasional forgetfulness, promote the ability to concentrate, increase attention span, reduce mental fatigue, and enhance overall cognitive performance. Other nutrients shown to support cognitive health include vitamin B12, curcumin, and resveratrol.

For more on topics related to healthy aging, don't miss the educational sessions from the Naturally Informed event Healthy Aging: Mastering the Market, available on demand at no cost (visit www.NaturallyInformed.net or scan the code to access). Experts offer insights into emerging science and trending topics including bladder health, eye health, and brain health, plus a look at Secrets of Super Agers and much more. WF



References are available and blue text is linked in the web version of this article, available at www.WholeFoodsMagazine.com

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—Jacqueline Rizo, Stratum Nutrition