



# SupplySide® Food & Beverage Journal

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Women's  
beverages:  
**Steeped in**  
functional  
ingredients



# CONTENTS



May 2025  
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4

## **Viewpoint: Women's wellness beverages finally glow up**

*by Audarshia Townsend*

Remember the chalky, medicinal weight management drinks of the past? Today's women are demanding more from their ready-to-drink functional beverages.

5

## **Brewing balance: Women's well-being gets a functional boost**

*by Cindy Hazen*

Precision wellness, a top 2025 trend, is redefining beverages with personalized benefits for women's unique life stages.

10

## **The Game Changers: 10 brands centering women's wellness in the beverage aisle**

*by Kim Decker*

Top brands go beyond vitamins, infusing drinks with creatine, collagen and functional mushrooms to support weight management, gut health and graceful aging.


15

## **Organic and low-sugar beverages have women sipping smarter**

*by Melissa Kvidahl Reilly*

Despite challenges like higher costs and shorter shelf life, brands are innovating with natural sweeteners like stevia, allulose and monk fruit, plus fiber-based prebiotics for gut health.

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## Women's wellness beverages finally glow up

**I vividly recall the types of beverages my mother kept on the first shelf of the refrigerator when she was in her late 40s and 50s.** First, these fiber-forward, weight management drinks were very medicinal-looking, in the type of solid white containers you'd see in a hospital. Second, she'd always water them down because she complained they were "too chalky," yet her doctor insisted she drink them at least once a day.

Flavors for these beverages were pretty standard, in chocolate, strawberry and vanilla, but that's where the similarities to ice cream shakes ended. My mom tried her best to jazz them up and make them creamier by mixing in bits of strawberries, blueberries and cherries, plus alternative sweeteners, in the blender. That did give her a more enjoyable drinking experience; however, she had to put a lot of effort into making them taste better.

Fast-forward to today and women in perimenopause and menopause have much better choices in ready-to-drink (RTD) wellness beverages. Yet, according to data analysis company 4Sight Focus, women want more benefits than ever before from these products. The company conducted a study in 2024 of 130 women and shared those proprietary results during a panel at this year's Natural Products Expo West show. Sixty-eight percent of the participants were looking for better sleep benefits, it revealed.

"Not only that, 72% of them are dissatisfied with the (food and beverage) solutions that they have today," panelist Norrie Wilson, chief empath & insights guru, 4Sight Focus, said. "If you want to drive growth in your business, this is a really great space [to consider]."

The study included some key ingredients that women want in their wellness beverages: magnesium for better [relaxation](#) and [bone density](#); collagen for better [skin, hair and nails](#); ashwagandha for [focus](#) and the list goes on. Equally important to know is that beyond the usual chocolate, strawberry and vanilla, women want beverages in traditional flavors mixed with the likes of lavender, citrus and mint.

Consider this month's digital magazine a valuable toolkit for beverage innovation as the content focuses on lower sugar options, intel on cutting-edge functional ingredients and more. Cheers to great health.

AZ

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## Brewing balance: Women's wellness gets a functional boost

by Cindy Hazen

**P**recision wellness, [named](#) a top 10 trend in 2025 by Innova Market Insights, encompasses foods and beverages that are personalized to life stage or gender needs. A host of targeted benefits are possible, including weight management, mood support, gut health and more.

It's the perfect concept to market beverages designed to attract female consumers. June Lin, VP of global innovation marketing at ingredient supplier ADM, agreed, saying, "We anticipate increased opportunity for foods and beverages tailored to these wellness areas that can be conveniently incorporated into women's daily routines."

### What's most important to women

A 2025 [report](#) from market research firm Mintel found that nearly 80% of U.S. women surveyed want greater control over managing their health, and recognize their needs evolve throughout different life stages. Support for sleep quality and energy were cited as ongoing areas where women are seeking functional solutions. Women who are menstruating, particularly those ages 18-24, are likely to report cramping, mood swings, trouble sleeping and lower energy levels. The maternal journey, whether a woman is currently pregnant or

recently postpartum, also presents significant challenges, with symptoms including mood swings, sleep disruptions and low energy.

The report also offers insights into the stages of life through menopause. Women's concerns shift. Women experiencing perimenopause or menopause report temperature irregularities and hormonal imbalances. Mood swings also tend to occur again for women ages 45-54, and poor sleep affects women through all phases of menopause. Associated weight gain and an impact on bone health and joint discomfort may also occur.

### The basics

Traditionally, the women's health industry has focused on products for pregnancy and



**Increasing nutrient intake** through functional beverages can be a great way to support **overall well-being.**

menopause. Mackenzie Leith, marketing manager for biotech company and ingredient supplier Kemin Human Nutrition & Health, has recently seen this shifting. “Today’s women are seeking products that target their general health and wellness, stress management, mental health, immune support and digestive health,” she noted.

At its core, wellness comes from proper nutrition. As such, while functional ingredients may address specific targets, it’s also important to limit the added sugar and calories, as well as incorporate essential nutrients. Lin suggested increasing nutrient intake through functional beverages can be a great way to support overall well-being. As an example, she said folic acids like L-methylfolate can be an excellent [wellness option](#) surrounding a woman’s reproductive years.

Vitamin E is an [important](#) antioxidant. ADM offers Novatol, a plant-derived vitamin E. Ingredient supplier Btsa offers vitamin E derived from non-GMO (genetically modified organism) vegetable sources. According to Jaclyn Fleischmann, North America director of sales at Btsa, “In its original form, natural vitamin E is a fat-soluble oil, making it easily incorporated into emulsified or lipid-containing

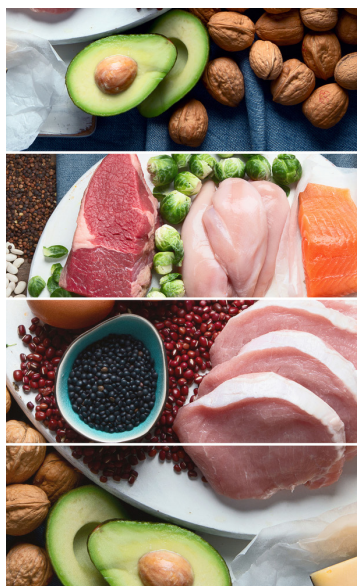
beverages. For water-based formulations, it is necessary to use either a powder form or a version with added emulsifiers to improve dispersibility.” She continued, “Since there is no universal format suitable for all applications, formulators have the flexibility to choose the most appropriate version for their specific needs.”

Adding more protein and fiber to daily diets is beneficial for women at any stage of life, but especially for those looking to address potential weight gain during menopause. Lin gave a nod to fiber, stating, “Our research finds consumers actively seek out fiber for reasons like weight management, satiety and digestive health support.”

### Functional ingredients to boost wellness

Nutrition biotech company Nuritas is taking an innovative approach to generating cutting-edge protein. “Our proprietary platform, Magnifier, uses advanced machine learning and our extensive dataset of molecules to identify natural peptides with specific health benefits,” Nora Khaldi, founder and CEO, said. “Peptides are small proteins that help the body communicate quickly to activate pathways,





Adding more **protein** and **fiber** to daily diets is beneficial for women at any stage of life, but especially for those looking to address potential weight gain during menopause.

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transmit signals and regulate cellular processes spanning metabolism, appetite, mood, collagen production and much more.”

Age-related muscle loss must be combatted post menopause. Resistance training, paired with adequate protein intake, can fuel muscle repair and growth to counter the side effects. “Nuritas has developed PeptiStrong, plant peptides from faba beans, that maximizes muscle protein synthesis [MPS] and allows consumers to amplify the effects of protein in their diet,” Khaldi claimed. “PeptiStrong is backed by three human clinical [trials](#) that show increased strength, power and energy. This is one ingredient example of how peptides can help address women’s health needs.”

At the later stages of life, skin typically begins losing its youthful beauty. Kemin offers FloraGLO Lutein, a nutritional [carotenoid](#) (pigmented powerhouse phytochemical). Leith

said the ingredient is backed by scientific [research](#), summing up, “FloraGLO has been shown to promote skin elasticity, reduce markers of oxidative stress and deliver anti-wrinkle benefits through the protection of the skin matrix.”

Nutritional carotenoids from Kemin have also [shown](#) to contribute to nutritional status during pregnancy and early life. “Since the body can’t produce lutein or zeaxanthin, and dietary intake is typically low, supplementation becomes essential,” Leith maintained. “These nutrients are clinically shown to improve the carotenoid status in both mother and baby, and support markers linked to infant eye and brain development.”

Women of all ages may face sleep challenges. For this, Leith recommended Kemin’s blend of spearmint (*Mentha spicata*) and green tea (*Camellia sinensis*) extract.





James Roza, chief scientific officer at plant-based solutions supplier Layn Natural Ingredients, suggested green tea extracts that are rich in theanine, ellagic acid and EGCG (epigallocatechin gallate) may offer potential health benefits by [inhibiting](#) oxidative stress.

“Oxidative stress is a known precursor to metabolic syndrome and other conditions that can affect a woman’s health as she ages,” Roza said. Layn’s green tea extracts are water-soluble, but they are more suitable for beverages with a lower pH. He described the flavor as umami that can benefit from using a natural plant-based sweetener such as monk fruit or stevia.

Gut health and general wellness go hand in hand. “For women’s beverages targeting benefits across different life stages, we

recommend functional ingredients that address both gut and systemic wellness,” Roza continued. “Galacan, a next-generation beta-glucan with self-affirmed GRAS [generally recognized as safe] status for beverages, offers total wellness support.” Unpublished studies Layn has conducted showed that it increased levels of *Lactobacillus brevis* in the large intestine and contributed to the production of butyrate, a key postbiotic.

According to the company, Galacan is neutral in flavor, heat stable to 170 C and compatible with formulas ranging in pH from 0 to 13. Roza advised that it’s naturally water-soluble and during accelerated stability testing showed to be shelf stable even at room temperature.

Roza noted that green tea extract and Galacan are ideal for most beverage formulations because of their functionality and synergism.

Lin observed that gut microbiome research continues to expand, including research studying the gut-skin axis. “Our AD Formulation, containing three probiotics – BPL1 [*Bifidobacterium animalis* subsp. *lactis* CECT8145], *Bifidobacterium longum* CECT7347 (ES1) and *Lactobacillus casei* CECT9104 (BPL4) – may help provide support for dry itchy skin, clear skin and skin vitality. Our Smooth Skin Formulation, which includes ES1, BPL1 and *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* CECT8361 (BPL15), has clinical research showing potential



## download

### Healthy and indulgent: Women’s snacks

Check out this separate digital magazine, which takes a deep look at female-focused snack offerings and new opportunities to address women’s specific needs.



to support different aspects related to skin health, clear skin and gut microbiome diversity.”

Body composition can also be targeted with biotics. “DE111 (*Bacillus subtilis*), a spore-forming probiotic, was shown to [support](#) a decrease in body fat percentage when examined in a study with female collegiate athletes,” she pointed out. “BPL1 probiotic and postbiotic [target factors](#) relevant to metabolic health. Emerging and in vitro evidence suggests that BPL1 postbiotic – in combination with diet and exercise – may help support visceral fat reduction, a healthy waist circumference and metabolic health pathways.”

ADM sees postbiotics and spore-forming probiotics as paving the way for the next generation of functional offerings like wellness beverages. “The postbiotic version of BPL1 and spore-forming probiotic DE111 can retain functionality through challenging beverage formulation conditions,” Lin shared. “Moreover, beverages can be fortified with fiber, like our Fibersol solution, while not sacrificing taste or texture.”

A prebiotic, Fibersol has clinical [research](#) demonstrating that consuming 10 grams with a meal may increase the appetite-regulating hormone GLP-1 (glucagon-like peptide-1) as part of a normal physiological response in healthy individuals. Per the company, the prebiotic fiber does not contribute flavor or odor; has high solubility, low viscosity and clarity; and is heat-, acid-, shear-, freeze- and thaw-stable.



[Cindy Hazen](#) is a food industry professional with decades of experience in food formulation and food safety. She is PCQI, HACCP and ISO 22000 trained.

### Formulating considerations

Whether crafting wellness beverages like sparkling waters, ready-to-drink (RTD) teas or protein shakes, it's important to think about the manufacturing process. “Typically, beverages undergo harsh formulation environments like high heat, which can impact ingredient efficacy,” Lin cautioned. “Additionally, ingredients may degrade over time due to light or oxygen exposure. When combining functional ingredients, there is potential for separation, sedimentation or flocculation.” To overcome these hurdles, she recommended sourcing extracts that utilize sophisticated technology, in addition to utilizing resilient solutions.

Vitamins, minerals and other functional ingredients can impart unwanted bitterness or other tastes incompatible with the desired profile. Color can be compromised. Working with a supplier's technical team can help overcome these challenges. ■



# The Game Changers

Here's a spotlight on 10 top brands leading the industry with successful concepts, mindful execution.



Mitra9

Remedy Organics



Narra

Melati Drinks



Good dirt



Bloom Pop

Sibahle Teas



Coco5

Urban remedy



Bear Maple Farms

IN THIS ISSUE

Ingredient innovation **p.5**

Category focus **p.15**

Table of contents **p.2**



## 10 brands centering women's wellness in the beverage aisle

by Kimberly J. Decker



If anyone has the power to change the game in women's wellness beverages, it may be women themselves.

**W**omen do 78% of household grocery shopping, one [report](#) noted, which could bode well for female-facing wellness beverages. Candace Smith-Lee, senior food scientist, aseptic beverages, Baldwin Richardson Foods, agreed, "Brands that pay extra heed to this consumer cohort will cash in on an underserved market."

She proposed drink brands should give supplement manufacturers a run for their money by boosting beverages beyond vitamins and minerals with buzzy ingredients like creatine, plant proteins, functional mushrooms, chia, collagen and aloe vera. If

brands are still "reducing women's health into defined hormonal states," Smith-Lee added, she wagered they'd score more points by formulating to help women support timeless needs: weight management; gut, heart and brain health; graceful aging; hydration; mood; and more.

Most of all, she advised product developers to respect their audience. "Personally," Smith-Lee divulged her own preference, "for a beverage brand to be a true game changer in the women's wellness space, it starts with a science-backed product made by women."

The following 10 brands are getting that game started.



### Melati Drinks – Botanical elixirs

**Founder:** Lorin Winata

**The story:** Winata loves gathering over food and drink as much as anyone. When digestive issues started sapping celebrations of joy, though, “That’s when I had to rethink alcohol,” she recalled. She built an alcohol-free “elixir” that rejects the cloyingly sweet, one-note profiles typical of nonalcoholic (NA) beverages, centering instead on the soothing botanicals she encountered growing up in Asia.

**Why it’s a game changer:** Melati Drinks “isn’t just another sparkling beverage,” Winata claimed, “but a luxurious functional ritual for women who want to feel their best without compromise.” She designed the elixirs to be healthy replacements for the nightcap, drawing upon a catalogue of “potent botanicals” like ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) to aid [digestion](#); black pepper (*Piper nigrum*) to support [metabolic health](#); clove (*Syzygium aromaticum*) for [antioxidant](#) support; and gentian root (from the *Gentiana* genus, and also known as bitter root), which traditional cultures have long used as a [detoxicant](#).

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### Sibahle Teas – Loose-leaf teas

**Founder:** Regina Brewton

**The story:** Sibahle – meaning “we are beautiful” in Zulu – Teas grew out of a deeply personal journey. “During my son’s battle with osteosarcoma, I became his full-time caregiver,” Brewton recalled. “In the midst of managing hospital visits, treatments and the emotional toll, I began neglecting my own needs and relying on sugary sodas just to cope. After his passing, I was left depleted both physically and emotionally.” That’s when she discovered the power of tea “not just as a drink,” she said, “but as a gentle, intentional, healing ritual.”

**Why it’s a game changer:** Brewton described Sibahle Teas as “a wellness beverage that doesn’t feel clinical or trendy, but soulful, beautiful and affirming.” She formulated the line with traditional African botanicals like rooibos (*Aspalathus linearis*) for [heart health](#) and [relaxation](#), honeybush (*Cyclopia*) for [hormonal balance](#), buchu (*Agathosma*) to aid the [urinary tract](#) and kinkileba (*Combretum micranthum*), “prized in West African medicine for [liver](#) and [digestive](#) support,” she maintained.





### Good dirt – Functional sodas

**Founder:** Lynn Callaway

**The story:** As a longtime proponent of urban agriculture and the farm-to-table movement, one may think Callaway would be the paragon of wellness. “But even with all that knowledge,” she reflected, “I found myself struggling after my son’s birth. My gut health was a mess, and with it came brain fog, exhaustion and a feeling of complete imbalance.” Desperate for a solution, she dove into botanical literature and cooked up concoctions leveraging fiber, fruits, herbs and functional fungi. The result: good dirt.

**Why it’s a game changer:** Good dirt is grounded on mushrooms and their support for [cognition](#), [immunity](#) and [well-being](#). “From Eastern medicine to West African Yoruba healing traditions,” Callaway said, “fungi have served not just as food, but as tools for maintaining balance and vitality.” Free of stevia and sugar alcohols but rich in “gentle fibers,” the soda “straddles the line between functional beverages, tonics and sodas,” she stated.

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### Bear Maple Farms – Sparkling ginseng tonics

**Founder:** Brian Bethke

**The story:** During peak pandemic, Bethke was cooped up in New York’s Catskill Mountains with little outlet besides exploring the nearby forest – which is where he found the region’s wild ginseng and towering maples. That sparked Bethke’s curiosity about ginseng’s [antioxidant](#), [immune](#) and [adaptogenic](#) benefits, while also motivating him to learn about maple water – “nature’s perfect sweetener,” as he called it – from a local farmer. Suspecting the two ingredients could make a promising pairing, he brewed ginseng root with maple water and fresh herbs at home, and realized, “I had to share this with the world.” His formulations use American (*Panax quinquefolius*) and Korean (*Panax ginseng*) root.

**Why it’s a game changer:** Bethke’s wife, Megan, is the guiding force behind the foods and beverages in the household. “We recognize that women are often the first adopters and tastemakers in health and wellness,” he said. “We designed our beverages with their unique needs in mind – supporting energy, mental clarity and stress resilience, all without caffeine or artificial additives.”



### Remedy Organics – Shakes and shots

**Founder:** Cindy Kasindorf

**The story:** After spending her days as a certified holistic nutritionist helping clients embrace plant-based lifestyles, Kasindorf would then decamp to the kitchen to make functional wellness shakes that she shared with them. Encouraged by her community to distribute her shakes more widely, she created Remedy Organics in 2017.

**Why it's a game changer:** The brand supports women's wellness with formulations that are geared toward immunity, gut health and mental focus, and feature ingredients like turmeric (*Curcuma longa*), maca (*Lepidium meyenii*, also known as Peruvian ginseng) root, MCT (medium-chain triglyceride) oil, elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*), lion's mane (*Hericium erinaceus*) mushroom and camu camu (*Myrciaria dubia*). Remedy also participates in programs like Breast Cancer Prevention Partners' Protect Our Breasts campaign, which educates women about limiting exposure to dangerous chemicals while partnering with brands committed to safer packaging.

Check out the rest of the list of game-changing brands, on page 19.



### watch

#### Supercharge your food and beverage supply chain – video

Get a glimpse of how automation can lead to efficiency, safety and growth in problematic supply chains, in this recent SupplySide session in Las Vegas.





## Organic and low-sugar beverages have women sipping smarter

by Melissa Kvidahl Reilly



**W**omen identify themselves as the primary grocery shoppers in more than three-fourths of households, per Numerator consumer [research](#). As a result, the trends that appeal to women significantly influence the broader food and beverage market.

When it comes to beverages, proprietary research from R&D partner and ingredient supplier Imbibe indicated that 92.3% of women prioritize drinks that align with their health goals and lifestyle, particularly seeking out natural products. “Brands that cater to women’s priorities – such as organic, low-sugar and nutrient-dense beverages – have the potential to drive broader market trends and meet the

growing demand for better-for-you options in the mainstream marketplace,” Kash Rocheleau, CEO of ingredient supplier Icon Foods, suggested. Nevertheless, this is often easier said than done.

Despite their growing popularity in the marketplace, organic ingredients still present several challenges for formulators that conventional ingredients don’t. Organic ingredients are generally more expensive than their conventional counterparts, and brands sourcing organic ingredients continue to face difficulties, including limited supply and seasonal variability. “Without synthetic preservatives, organic beverages also have a shorter shelf life,” Rocheleau, said, “often



## Organic ingredients still present several challenges for formulators that conventional ingredients don't.

requiring refrigeration or specialized packaging, which increases logistics, cost and distribution challenges.”

To overcome these hurdles, Imbibe marketing associate Matt Bae suggested brands partner with experienced product development teams to ensure consistent taste, quality and availability of organic ingredients. Rocheleau elaborated, “Ensuring that your supply chain partners have diversified sourcing reduces the risks associated with seasonal shortages, geopolitical issues and supply chain disruptions.” She noted that buying organic ingredients in bulk is another strategy to offset some of the higher costs of using such ingredients.

Many beverage brands for women are also trying to limit or even eliminate sugar from their formulations, which presents a whole other array of challenges. Sugar not only delivers a balanced and satisfyingly sweet taste profile but also supports a beverage's body and

mouthfeel. Smaro Kokkinidou, principal food scientist at multinational food corporation Cargill, pointed out that avoiding sugar can cause drinks to feel thin or watery. “Wellness beverages, infused with functional ingredients, bring additional challenges,” she cautioned. “Bitterness, astringency, metallic notes, chalkiness and earthy undertones are just a few of the unwanted elements that may need to be addressed.”

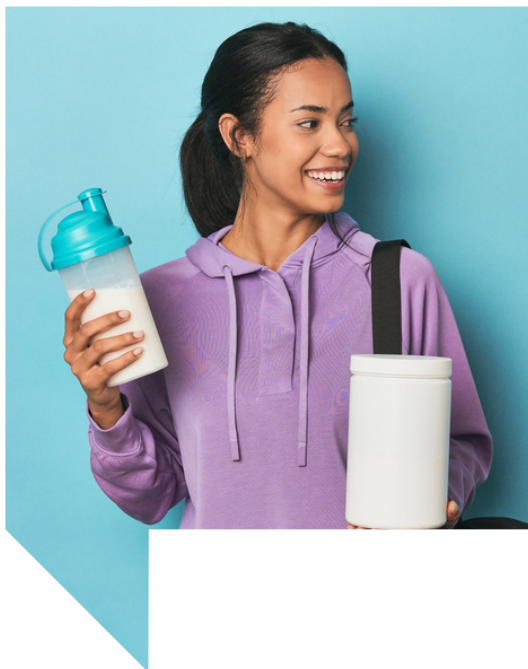


## read

### TikTok, nostalgia, sustainability shape consumer preferences for F&B products

Younger consumers prioritize sustainability and transparency in ingredient sourcing. That was a major takeaway from a recent SupplySide session in Las Vegas.

## Category focus



Sugar alternatives may increase costs and supply chain challenges, as well as extend product launch timelines. Bae explained that combining the requirements for organic and low sugar amplifies the challenges associated with both. “Formulators must find organic, natural sweeteners that not only reduce sugar content but also provide necessary functional properties without compromising taste or texture,” he stated. “Additionally, they must ensure that all ingredients are certified organic and comply with clean label expectations, which can be costly and complex.”

### Solving the challenges

According to Kokkinidou, today’s most popular sugar-reduction strategies still center on stevia, which is also available as an organic ingredient. Allulose is another leading choice, since it’s a naturally occurring sweetener that mimics the taste and texture of sugar [without spiking](#) blood glucose levels. Rocheleau said allulose, also available in organic varieties, is ideal for women’s protein shakes, collagen drinks and meal replacement beverages,


providing sweetness without impacting metabolism. Similarly, monk fruit is another popular option for plant-based, low-sugar and low-calorie women’s beverages with [minimal](#) glycemic impact.

Some pairing of these is often the best option, with the combination of stevia and monk fruit capable of producing a high intensity but balanced sweetness, and the blend of erythritol and allulose capable of providing about 70% the sweetness of sugar, as well as bulk and texture. CPG companies like Olipop, Health-Ade and functional tea brands are already leveraging such blends to great success, while offering low-sugar and organic beverages catering to women’s health priorities.

Another effective method for reducing sugar is leveraging enzymatic or fermentation-based approaches, which naturally break down sugars while preserving taste and texture. “This technique is especially useful in functional drinks like kombucha, herbal tonics and plant-based lattes, where fermentation enhances both flavor and probiotic content,” Rocheleau stated. In the market, Bae said Humm Kombucha is one brand doing it right, offering a zero-sugar line with flavors like Acai Blueberry, Blood Orange and Dragon Fruit. “They use a sweetener system combining allulose syrup







**Creating a low-sugar and organic beverage can be challenging,** but with the right formulation expertise and industry knowledge, it doesn't have to be.

and monk fruit and clarify that fermentation eliminates the kombucha's initial sugar content," Bae shared.

These kinds of creative flavor combinations represent another formulation tactic that can help women's beverage brands battle the off-notes that accompany some functional ingredients. For example, Kokkinidou suggested bitter tastes can be offset with citrus flavors like grapefruit, while earthy tastes can be offset by mango. "Once we've landed on the best sweetening system and characterizing flavors, we can help formulators dial in the right level of sweetness," she said. "It's a game of nuances."

For women's wellness beverages emphasizing digestive health, fiber-based sweeteners like chicory root fiber, soluble tapioca fiber, inulin and gum acacia make sense. In fact, many prebiotic sodas, kombuchas and electrolyte drinks already integrate fiber-based sweeteners, thanks

to their mild sweetness and gut microbiome benefits. Per Rocheleau, "The key to fibers is stacking different types to ensure that the metabolization process is spread out, avoiding GI [gastrointestinal] impact." To that end, Icon Foods is introducing a new fiber blend of organic soluble tapioca fiber, organic agave inulin and organic gum acacia, premixed in optimal amounts to maximize fiber and prebiotic benefits, while avoiding the digestive discomfort that can occur with single fiber use.

"Creating a low-sugar and organic beverage can be challenging, but with the right formulation expertise and industry knowledge, it doesn't have to be," Rocheleau advised. "While ingredient limitations, cost and stability issues can present hurdles, brands that leverage strategic ingredient selection, innovative formulation techniques and a deep understanding of organic compliance can successfully achieve both goals." ■



[Melissa Kvidahl Reilly](#) is a freelance writer and editor with 10 years of experience covering news and trends in the natural, organic and supplement markets. She lives and works in New Jersey.



### **Bloom Pop – Functional sodas**

**Founder:** Mari Llewellyn, co-founder and president, Bloom Nutrition

**The story:** Bloom Nutrition has colonized dietary supplement shelves everywhere, so the brand threw its hat into the functional-soda ring with Bloom Pop “to offer a refreshing, indulgent option that aligns with our core values of fun, function and being female-forward,” Llewellyn said.

**Why it’s a game changer:** The pops’ top-tier taste and gut-support benefits “speak to our community,” Llewellyn maintained. Credit for the latter goes to the soda’s use of trademarked PreticX prebiotic fiber, a xylooligosaccharide (XOS) that showed to foster healthy [gut bacteria](#) at doses as low as 1 gram per serving. The brand’s flavor selection flaunts favorites like orange, raspberry-lemon and Shirley Temple, which, Llewellyn said “is already emerging as the crowd winner, maybe because it strikes the perfect balance between nostalgia and novelty.”

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### **Coco5 – Flavored coconut water**

**Founder:** Jim Reynolds, majority owner

**The story:** Coco5, a wellness beverage unexpectedly conceptualized in the locker room of pro hockey team the Chicago Blackhawks, also gained popularity with women and mothers seeking a clean, sugar-free and naturally flavored hydration option for their families.

**Why it’s a game changer:** Naturally hydrating, rich in electrolytes, low in calories and plant-based, the coconut water is a base that Reynolds believes “our female consumers gravitate toward.” Beyond that, he continued, the brand’s values, functionality, transparency and flavor all align with what women demand from wellness beverages: “a way to stay hydrated with a delicious, gut-friendly, additive-free alternative to traditional sports drinks.”



### Mitra9 – Kratom beverages

**Founder:** Dallas Vasquez, co-founder and CEO

**The story:** Vasquez and his brand's co-creators didn't launch their kratom (*Mitragyna speciosa*) seltzers and ready-to-mix (RTM) stick packs specifically for women. They did, however, notice "huge demand on the part of health-conscious women for balance in their busy lives," he said. And that's "when we knew that Mitra9 had a place in the women's wellness space."

**Why it's a game changer:** "There are many women already out there kicking some ass," Vasquez stated. "But we also know that not many people wake up feeling like superheroes." That, he said, is where his company's products may help: "Many women appreciate Mitra9 as a refreshing option for unwinding after work, enjoying a nonalcoholic social beverage or incorporating plant-based choices into their daily routine."

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### Narra – Plant-based tea lattes

**Founder:** Victoria Reyes

**The story:** Reyes, who founded Narra with her brother, Miggy, was working at Starbucks corporate when she noticed how drained and jittery the typical sugar-laden café or energy drink left her. "But what if," she wondered, "there was a ready-to-drink [RTD] tea latte that provided clean energy, was better-for-you, and still had rich flavor and tradition?"

**Why it's a game changer:** Narra's tea and oat milk lattes were the answer. Clocking in at 4 to 6 grams of added sugar per serving, they boast tea's natural [nootropic](#), L-theanine, plus adaptogens to help smooth [stress](#) and prebiotics for [gut health](#). Paying tribute to their Asian heritage, the Reyes siblings developed the line with flavorful SKUs like strawberry matcha and roasted oolong.



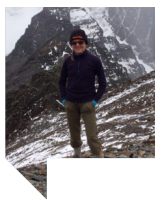


### Urban Remedy – Meal plans and more

**Founder:** Neka Pasquale

**The story:** Growing up in the farm-to-table culture of Northern California and drawing on her belief that “food is healing,” former acupuncturist Pasquale founded Urban Remedy after seeing her patients benefit greatly from her nutritional and lifestyle recommendations.

**Why it’s a game changer:** A holistic brand, Urban Remedy particularly excels in three-day “meal plan” kits featuring a range of food and beverage products curated by and for women – from the likes of Kate Upton and Cindy Crawford to collections geared toward “kickstarting metabolism” or “resetting” the body. ■



Kimberly J. Decker is a Bay Area food writer who has worked in product development for the frozen sector and written about food, nutrition and the culinary arts. Reach her at [kim@decker.net](mailto:kim@decker.net).

  
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