



Can food supplements
help reduce healthcare
costs in the EU?

www.foodsupplementseurope.org

About Food Supplements Europe

Food Supplements Europe is a not-for-profit trade organisation based in Brussels. It represents the interests of the European food supplements sector in establishing an appropriate regulatory framework and advancing public health research and innovation for the benefit of European consumers.

Our membership includes national associations and companies who are committed to partnership with regulatory and scientific bodies on food supplement matters.

Find out more at www.foodsupplementseurope.org

What are food supplements?

An adequate and varied diet can, under normal circumstances, provide all necessary nutrients for normal development and maintenance of a healthy life. However, surveys show that this ideal situation is not being achieved for all nutrients and by all groups of the population across the European Union.

Food supplements are concentrated sources of nutrients sold in the form of capsules, pastilles, tablets, pills, sachets of powder, ampoules of liquids and drop dispensing bottles. They are taken in small doses, as indicated on the product label.

Millions of people all over the world use supplements as a handy way to top up the nutrition they obtain from their diet, ensuring they don't miss out on anything important. They offer a safe and easy way to meet recommended intakes for essential nutrients – something many of us struggle to do through food and drink alone.

Life expectancy is rising – and so is the cost of healthcare

The global population is growing fast¹ and people are living for longer.²

As a result, the cost of treating chronic health conditions associated with ageing is rising. Across the European Union, this is putting healthcare systems and budgets under pressure.

But a significant body of research indicates that we can reduce the risk of being affected by some of these conditions if certain nutrients in the diet are consumed at sufficient levels.

Furthermore, there is emerging evidence that the use of food supplements in this way could result in healthcare savings worth billions of euros.

Food supplements are a convenient way to help people achieve an optimal intake of nutrients. In light of this, some researchers have explored how the daily use of food supplements could benefit EU citizens who are at risk of cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis.

It is early days, but the findings to-date are highly encouraging, and this is an area that is worthy of further investigation.

¹ <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/news/population/2015-report.html>

² http://www.who.int/gho/mortality_burden_disease/life_tables/situation_trends_text/en/

CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

Omega 3 epa+dha

POTENTIAL SAVINGS

€12.9 billion/year³

In the EU, there are 157.6 million people aged 55 or over.

Of this demographic group, 24% (38.4 million people) are considered to be in danger of experiencing a hospital event attributed to cardiovascular disease (CVD) over the next 5 years.

The annual cost to healthcare systems of dealing with these events is estimated to be as high as €266 billion.

But researchers have calculated that more widespread daily consumption of Omega 3 EPA+DHA supplements among individuals aged 55 or over would result in 1.5 million fewer CVD-related hospital events across the EU.

**This would generate savings of
€12.9 billion per year across the EU.**



³ Healthcare Cost Savings of Omega 3 Food Supplements in the European Union Europe: Economic Implication of Managing CVD through Targeted Enhanced Nutrition (2016) Food Supplements Europe and Frost & Sullivan

CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

Phytosterols

POTENTIAL SAVINGS

€5.3 billion/year⁴

Severe hypercholesterolemia is the presence of very high levels of LDL cholesterol in the blood. It is strongly associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD).

There are 31.1 million people in the EU living with severe hypercholesterolemia. They have an estimated 24.3% risk of experiencing a CVD-attributed hospital event.

Phytosterols are plant compounds that are proven to reduce levels of LDL cholesterol.

Researchers have found that by consuming just 1.7g of phytosterols a day, adults aged 55 or over and with severe hypercholesterolemia would cut their risk of experiencing a CVD-attributed hospital event by 2.3% basis points.

This would result in healthcare costs savings of €5.3 billion a year.



⁴Healthcare Cost Savings of Phytosterol Food Supplements in the European Union: Economic Implications of Managing Cardiovascular Disease with Phytosterol Food Supplements with Demonstrated LDL-cholesterol Reduction Capabilities (2017) Food Supplements Europe and Frost & Sullivan

BONE HEALTH

Calcium + Vitamin D

POTENTIAL SAVINGS

€4 billion/year⁵

There are 1.24 million fractures related to osteoporosis in the EU every year. Treating them costs €26.4 billion annually.

More than 27.8 million EU citizens aged 55 or over have osteoporosis. Scientific research shows that daily supplementation with 1,000mg of calcium and 15mcg of vitamin D results in a 15% reduction in the risk of osteoporosis-attributed fractures.

If all of these at-risk individuals were to consume calcium and vitamin D at this amount and regularity, there could be 186,690 fewer fractures every year.

This would equate to savings of €4 billion per annum in avoidable healthcare costs.

⁵ Healthcare Cost Savings of Calcium and Vitamin D Food Supplements in the European Union: Exploring the Burden of Osteoporosis-attributed Bone Fractures in the European Union and the Benefits of Calcium + Vitamin D Food Supplements (2017) Food Supplements Europe and Frost & Sullivan





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