



## **Wellmune® – Functional Ingredients Can Close the Kids' Beverage Innovation Gap**

**Mayfield Heights, OH, May 29, 2019** – Children are underserved by beverage markets, and manufacturers can close this “innovation gap” by using nutritional ingredients, according to the makers of Wellmune®, a yeast beta glucan clinically proven to help support the immune system.

The global beverage market is booming – its value is expected to surpass \$1 trillion by 2022, according to Euromonitor. Many products in the category are heavily consumed by children. Mintel research shows that in the US, 94 percent of six- to eleven-year-olds drink juice, and in the UK, eight in ten kids consume fruit juices and smoothies.

However, few beverage products are explicitly created for children and relatively little new product development targets them. Between December 2012 and November 2017, just 5 percent of new water launches, 6 percent of juice drinks, and 6 percent of other beverages were aimed at kids. By contrast, 17 percent of new breakfast cereal launches over the same period were child-focused.<sup>[1]</sup>

A new white paper from Wellmune demonstrates that healthy, functional ingredients that offer nutritional benefits may be the key to kickstarting innovation in the category. Eight in ten parents say their choice of product is influenced by how it will affect their child's health and well-being<sup>[2]</sup> and most prefer their kids to get health-enhancing ingredients from food and drink rather than pills.<sup>[3]</sup>

Furthermore, the addition of functional ingredients may help restore the parent-appeal of beverages that have suffered a loss of reputation. Juices, for example, were once seen as a healthy choice for children, but are now often demonized for their high sugar content. The use of functional ingredients creates opportunities to offset such concerns, as well as offering nutritional benefits that allow product differentiation.

John Quilter, Wellmune's Vice President and General Manager, said: “While strategies such as sugar reduction are important, the real opportunity to differentiate kids' beverage products lies in the use of healthy, clinically proven functional ingredients. They can further support the health halo of functional beverages for children, increasing appeal to parents and allowing products to stand out from the crowd. They could well be the key to giving the children's beverage space the innovation boost it needs.”

One functional benefit area where there is high potential for innovation and growth is immune health. Keeping kids well is a priority for parents, and young immune systems are vulnerable. But despite high levels of interest, only 2 percent of children's food and drink products launched globally between 2012 and 2017 carried an immune system claim, indicating a major opportunity for manufacturers.<sup>[4]</sup>



Kerry's natural immune health ingredient, Wellmune, is a proprietary baker's yeast beta 1.3/1.6 glucan. In [clinical studies](#), children who took it reported two-thirds fewer upper respiratory tract infections. Nearly nine in ten (87 percent) of consumers said they would be interested in buying a refrigerated juice product if it contained Wellmune and 81 percent said they would prefer boxed juices for kids that contained Wellmune.<sup>[5]</sup>

To find out more about trends in children's beverages as well as opportunities for innovation, download the white paper, ["Closing the Innovation Gap in the Kids' Beverage Category."](#)

### **About Wellmune®**

Wellmune® is a natural food, beverage, and supplement ingredient clinically proven to help strengthen the immune system, making it easier for people of all ages to be well and stay well. Part of Kerry's ProActive Health portfolio, Wellmune is a proprietary baker's yeast beta 1.3/1.6 glucan, and is patented, Kosher, Halal, non-allergenic, non-GMO, gluten-free, and organic compliant. As a global brand available in more than 60 countries, Wellmune has regulatory approval in major markets, including GRAS status in the US and novel food approval in Europe and China. A recipient of numerous industry awards, Wellmune is part of Kerry's nutrition and wellness portfolio. For more information, visit [Wellmune.com](http://Wellmune.com) or follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

### **Notes**

- 1) Mintel, Children's Nutrition Insight, December 2017
- 2) GlobalData, Global Consumer Survey, Q3 2018
- 3) GlobalData, Top Trends in Baby and Child Care, April 2018
- 4) Mintel, Children's Nutrition Insight, December 2017
- 5) Consumer Insights, Concept/Benefit Screen, 2014

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