As wellness concepts shape industries from retail to travel, even the food and drink industry, which already has a close association with wellness, is evolving. From green juice and smoothies to edible antioxidant powders, food has become another way to manage weight, mood, and overall wellbeing.

Today, “eating healthy” is even a tool in some doctor’s toolkits. And at the same time, new services are making it easier to follow doctor's orders, turning food into a more quantifiable, but still enjoyable, factor in managing chronic conditions like heart disease and obesity.

"There’s no question people can take things a long way toward reversing diabetes, reversing hypertension, even preventing cancer by food choices,” Dr. Daniel Nadeau Orange County, CA told NPR recently, calling the moment a “cultural shift.”

Nadeau is part of a “Shop with Your Doc” program, one of several initiatives nationwide that have doctors and patients tackling diet together. According to a February Nielsen survey, 60% of Americans say they already make conscious diet choices to prevent medical conditions, including diabetes, high cholesterol and obesity. But having a doctor present eliminates ambiguity about what is and isn't healthy.

Some brands are already positioning themselves to take advantage of this new mindset. Euphebe is a health company whose prescription is food. A full-immersion, 28-day ReBoot includes prepared, plant-based meals, as well as a tech-based coaching platform that provides education, motivation and support to drive long-term behavior change. The cost for the program is $650 for a full month, including 48 lunches and dinners.

“The consumer today cares more about their food—what’s in it and where it came from,” Nadja Pinnavaia, founder and CEO of Euphebe, told the Innovation Group. “The consumer is busier than ever and ready to adopt new food models, such as prepared meals and delivery, for convenience. They are also measurement driven and want to monitor their progress.”
Euphebe is dedicated to tackling the “two-hour Crappy Food Cycle of ‘Eat. Crash. Hunger. Eat More’” shaped by nutrient starvation and our addiction to sugar. “Unless we break the dependency to sugar and return to a whole-food, highly nutritious way of eating,” says Pinnavaia, “our wellbeing will not significantly improve.”

The trend also has important implications in the grocery store, where foods with disease-fighting properties are showing up everywhere from children’s meals to chocolate bars.

According to Nielsen, households managing a chronic condition (including lactose intolerance, gluten allergies and diabetes) spend more on food purchases. The 16 million American households managing...
diabetes, for example, spend 6% more annually in the fresh produce department than the average household, including up to 18% more on fruits and vegetables.

Public awareness of chronic disease has certainly reached a critical mass, as the CDC estimates that nearly half of all adults have a chronic medical condition (and that chronic disease accounts for 86% of annual health care costs). As medical and lifestyle factors converge, the trend in “prescribing” food will create new opportunities for health-driven food platforms to come.


**Prescription nutrition**

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