

Snacks with added benefits the latest trend



Whats the new trend gaining market share in snacks? It isnt chocolate, and it isnt candy. Its consumers looking to get more from their snack time. The trend is evident in the rise of functional snack products on display at the All Candy Expo that opened Tuesday at McCormick Place in Chicago.

When people look today at their meals, they really look like the snacks of a few years ago, said Jill Manchester, vice president of immediate consumption at Northfield-based Kraft Foods Inc., during a presentation on industry trends at the show. According to a study by Nielsen Co., functional products such as gum with whitening offer big growth potential. Therefore, it becomes important to grab market attention, for average consumers are purchasing candy every 18 days. By far, the biggest push at the All Candy Expo is in the area of gum with added benefits.

People may remember the Jolt brand from the soft drink market, but the added energy also comes in a gum form from GumRunners LLC, a Jersey City, N.J.-based manufacturer. Kevin Gass, one of the co-founders, said that the Jolt gum is the oldest functional gum product on the market. But GumRunners Jolt product faces some tough competition. VE2 Energy Gum was debuted by John Katsoulis. His company already has it in some Miami-area outlets, but is looking to take it national with the help of the show. He said that two pieces of the gum, two years in the making, contain as much natural caffeine as a single energy drink or a cup of coffee.

It is a great delivery system, Katsoulis said. You dont lose functionally as much as if you ingest it. Gass displayed GumRunners new product, Nutra-Trim Gum. Its a weight management chewing gum, meaning it contains ingredients to help control your appetite and increase your metabolism. People were already chewing gum to control their appetite, Gass said. This creates an added effect. Cadbury Adams USA LLC, which manufactures Trident, is expanding its product line with a new gum featuring Recaldent which the company says is clinically proven to help strengthen tooth enamel.

Marketing it as Trident Xtra Care, Cadbury is looking to continue Tridents position as the best selling sugar-free gum in the world. Were encouraged by what the future holds in store because our gums deliver against three top food and snacking trends: make it healthy; make it exciting; and make it easy, said Brad Irwin, president of Cadbury in a press release. Keeping it natural and healthy is a trend that carries over even to the chocolate side of the All Candy Expo. New products are touted as organic and all natural. New Jersey-based Mars Snackfoods US LLC used a press conference to again push the benefits of its specialty line of chocolate, which Mars says contain more flavanols than the average brand. Flavanols are a naturally occurring substance in chocolate which may have heart benefits. Whatever the delivery method, the key for manufacturers is grabbing a piece of the \$7.6 billion snack business, especially in the confectionary area which is 34 percent of the market and growing 3 percent annually, according to the industry.