

Baby Boomers Nutrition Attitudes

Baby boomers are the generation born after the second World War between 1946 and 1964. In 1946, 3.4 million children were born in the U.S.. Each year afterwards saw increases on the order of 20% over the preceding year until 1964. A total of 78 million baby boomers had been born by 1964 created a huge demographic group that acquired more education than any previous generation. During the Vietnam War and Civil Rights era in the 1960's, this generation got a reputation for being rebellious and charting a different social course from their parents.

Now, as the baby boomers enter their 60's and 70's, they account for over 25 percent of the U.S. population. They are also retiring from the workforce, and are often empty nesters. Marketing trends reviewed by Lauren Hartman in Food Processing conclude that baby boomers spend more of their grocery budget on health and wellness products than other generations. They generally plan to add more fiber, protein, calcium, whole grains and vitamins to their diet and reduce consumption of red meat. They prefer products reducing ingredients they perceive as unhealthy. They also want functional foods in good tasting and convenient forms that fit their lifestyle. The hottest trending functional food ingredients in 2016 according to Packaged Facts included plant proteins, microalgae, omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D and magnesium.

Boomers are expected to live longer than any previous generation of Americans. Of the 3.4 million born in 1946, 2.8 million are still alive. The men can expect to live another 22 years, the women another 25. Aging well has widespread appeal among boomers according to Innova, a Netherlands-based market research firm*. They also notes opportunities in age-related products including brain/cognitive health, bone health, skin health, joint health and eye health.

By 2030, when the first baby boomers reach 84, the number of Americans over 65 will have grown by 75% to 69 million. That means more than 20% of the population will be over 65, compared with only 13% today. More than 35% will be over 50. The challenge to society is to instill healthy active lifestyles and diet quality for baby boomers to keep them as healthy as possible and then assuring that sufficient resources and an effective service system are available in thirty years, when the elderly population is twice what it is today.

- Hartman, Lauren Foods for Aging Baby Boomers Food Processing Magazine January 2016 <http://www.foodprocessing.com/articles/2016/foods-for-aging-baby-boomers/>

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