

Nutritional OUTLOOK

Weight Expectations: Science-backed weight-management supplement ingredients



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In the never-ending quest for weight-management solutions, ingredient suppliers continue to introduce ingredients to market while substantiating those that are longstanding. The last many months have brought about a number of significant discoveries in terms of new research and new products to market. Whether the manufacturer's interest lies in botanicals or highly innovative extractions, there's a vast array of ingredients to consider.

Here we share some scientific highlights from around the dietary supplement industry, all relating to ingredients for weight management.

Chromium Picolinate

Some ingredients in the weight-management category have been shown to encourage fat loss. Unfortunately, these ingredients also tend to encourage lean body mass loss.

A recent scientific review comparing popular weight-loss ingredients found that chromium picolinate encouraged fat loss alongside the lowest amount of lean body mass.¹ It's great news for Nutrition 21 LLC (Purchase, NY), which funded the study on its Chromax chromium picolinate ingredient against popular weight-loss ingredients. Besides Chromax, the study included green tea (*Camellia sinensis*), malabar tamarind (*Garcinia cambogia*), and African mango (*Irvingia gabonensis*).

"Healthy muscle mass has been more commonly referred to as the 'currency of aging,' likely because without it the body will start to break down, negatively impacting movement and balance," says Mallory Junggren, senior director of marketing at Nutrition 21. "However, the more lean muscle you can retain, the better your chances are of preserving that mobility."

An essential nutrient for humans, chromium helps insulin function by more effectively transporting glucose into cells. By improving insulin function, muscle cells get the nutrients they need for proper muscle maintenance. It's a holistic-sounding approach to weight loss, and one that the company is interested in better understanding with future scientific research.

Chromax is available in powder format for use in tablets, capsules, nutrition bars, and pre-mixed beverages.

Okra Pod Powder

Known for its slimy quality in various cooking preparations, okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*) has a high mucilage content. The mucilage contains fibers that can bind to fat and, in so doing, eliminate fat from the body prior to its absorption. The phenomenon makes okra a unique candidate for weight-management solutions.

Nexira (Rouen Cedex, France) is capitalizing on okra as a fat binder with its new ingredient Okralin, a patented combination of okra pod powder and inulin. According to the company's latest animal research, Okralin works as a fat binder more effectively than okra itself and more effectively than cactus powder and chitosan, which are both sold commercially for their fat-binding properties. A more recent human study suggests that Okralin promoted weight loss significantly more than a placebo in 12 weeks.²

While Nexira's Okralin is marketed primarily as a fat binder, okra itself is increasingly understood as having other properties that are useful in weight and diabetes management.

A Compound in Shilajit

Having already created a successful market for shilajit as a healthy aging ingredient, Natreon (New Brunswick, NJ) has more plans for shilajit in the future. In March 2019, the company earned a U.S. patent for an isolated compound in shilajit and "prevention and/or treatment of body weight gain."

Shilajit is a rock exudate used in Ayurveda and sourced from the Himalayas and other mountain regions. Within the substance, Natreon isolated a compound called urolithin B. The compound is at the center of Natreon's new U.S. patent, and *Nutritional Outlook* will learn more about it as Natreon moves closer to marketing. For now, Natreon has developed and identified standardization procedures, biomarker compounds, and undisclosed pharmacological studies to support a future market for the ingredient.