

## **The impact of the COVID-19 on the consumption of food supplements in the Lithuanian population**

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### **Background:**

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the dietary changes of the population. The aim - to evaluate the changes in the consumption of food supplements in the Lithuanian population over 1997-2020, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the consumption of food supplements.

### **Methods:**

A representative sample of the Lithuanian adult population was formed by sex, age and the number of residents in each county. A total of 2573 adult respondents were surveyed using questionnaires on their consumption of food supplements and the results were compared to previous studies. SPSS, 20.0 for Windows version was used for the statistical analysis of the data. The reliability of the differences was found by the chi-squared ( $\chi^2$ ) test with statistical significance of  $p \leq 0.05$ .

### **Results:**

Between 1997 and 2017, food supplements were never taken by an average of 37-47 % of the Lithuanian population. In 2020, the number of never users dropped to 17.6 % and 82.4 % of the Lithuanian population started taking food supplements, mostly to strengthen the body and boost the immune system. The number of daily consumers more than doubled - from 8.9 % in 2017 to 18.6 % in 2020. In recent years the number of consumers of food supplements for 3-4 months per year has

doubled and reached 15.5%. The percentage of users for 1-2 months per year (13%) has been almost stable in recent years and only a slight change occurred in the number of occasional users of food supplements - from 30.3% in 2017 up to 34.4 % in 2020.

**Conclusions:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has provoked the consumption of food supplements by the Lithuanian population - the number of users has increased from 59 % to 82.4 %, and the number of daily users doubled to 18.6 %. The population mainly consumes food supplements mainly to strengthen the body and boost the immune system.

**Key messages:**

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the increase of food supplement consumption.
- The population mainly consumes food supplements mainly to strengthen the body and boost the immune system.