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# Traditional But Trendy: Capsules And Tablets Lead VMS Delivery Formats Despite Gummy Growth

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## Executive Summary

Natural Marketing Institute survey found capsules (42%) and tablets (41%) are most popular supplement formats followed by gummies (35%). Results presented during a Council for Responsible Nutrition webinar showed younger consumers are willing to try formats such as tinctures, oral sprays and tablets.



Capsules and tablets remain the most popular delivery formats for vitamins, minerals and supplements in the US even as gummy products soar in popularity, according to a Natural Marketing Institute Inc. survey

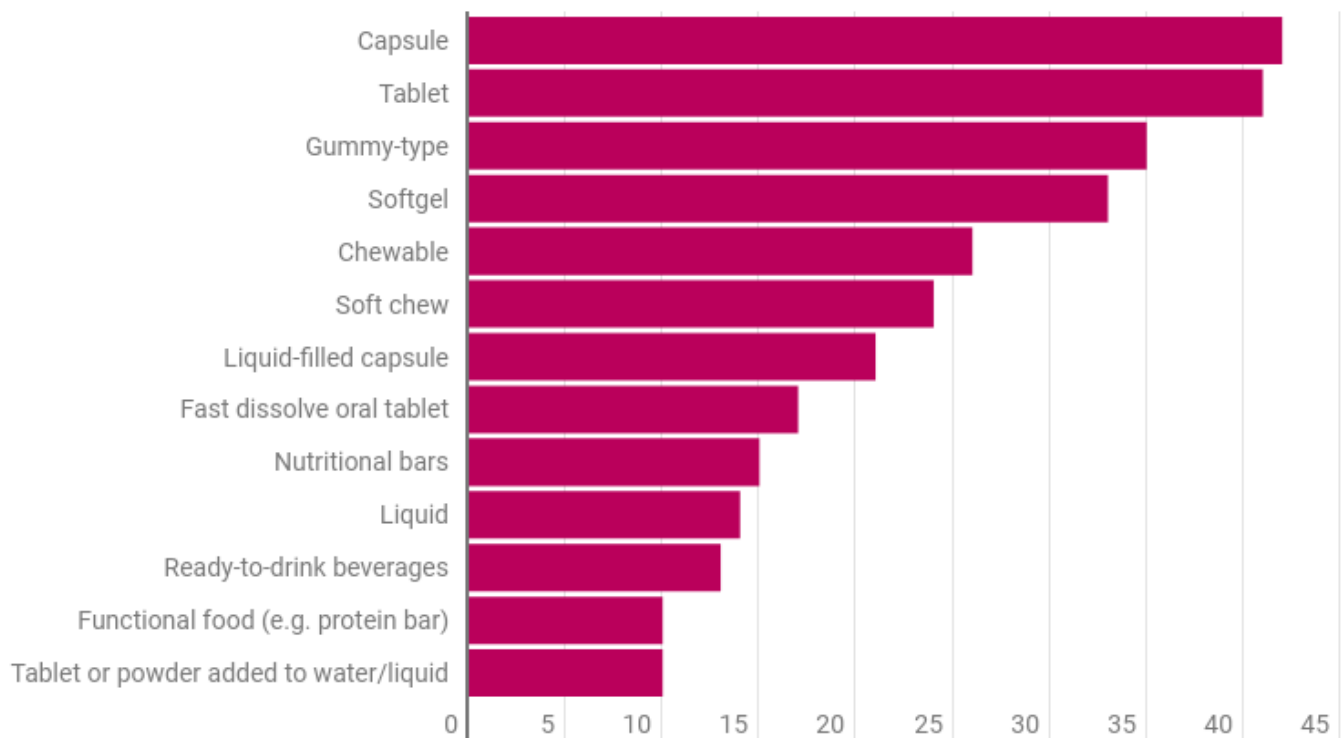
During a Council for Responsible Nutrition webinar on delivery formats on 15 December, Diane Ray, NMI's strategic innovation vice president, said among 2,000 consumers surveyed online earlier in the fourth quarter, 42% said they would choose a capsule format, including liquid capsules, and 41% identified tablets as their supplement delivery format preference.

“It isn’t specifically a form they go for necessarily, it is a combination of the nutrient itself and the form,” Ray said, noting many nutrients are available in limited formats. “We know everyone wants to feel the product they are taking is customized to them, not just the nutrients and dosages but also the format.”

The survey, which allowed participants to choose as many as they wanted from two dozen formats offered as choices, showed gummies are favored by 35%.

As reasons for consumers choosing capsules, 72%, products are easy to swallow; 39%, products don’t have a taste or smell; 23%, products are easier on the stomach; and some also cited absorbable quality, low/no sugar benefit and low calories, according to Philadelphia-based noted NMI, which was purchased earlier in 2020 by Research America Inc.

## Consumer Preferences From Capsules To Powders



NATURAL MARKETING INSTITUTE SURVEY CONDUCTED DURING THE CURRENT QUARTER ASKED 2,000 CONSUMERS THEIR PREFERENCES FOR VMS PRODUCT FORMATS.

*Natural Marketing Institute survey results presented during Council for Responsible Nutrition webinar on 15 December, 2020.*

Gummies are among the fastest-growing supplement delivery formats of supplement nutrition, with use growing 137% between 2009 and 2020, noted Ray.

The youngest consumers polled, the 25-and-younger “iGens,” are most receptive to gummies: 76% had purchased some within the past six months. Among other age groups, 68% of millennials (24 to 39), 58% of “GenXers” (40-55), 27% of baby boomers (56-74) and 15% of matures (75 and older) stating the same.

Most often, consumers choose gummies due to difficulty swallowing pills, Older consumers in particular take gummies largely for ease of swallowing, Ray noted. And many consumers are “pill fatigued” from taking multiple pills daily, she added. For them, gummies feel like less of a chore and even are “fun” to use.

Among supplement users 65 and older, choking or pill-induced dysphagia caused 37.6% of emergency room visits linked supplement-related adverse events and micronutrients were implicated in 83.1%, according to FDA records.

Product format popularity skews overall among generations, NMI found. For example, while baby boomers and matures favor traditional formats including tablets, capsules and softgels, iGens in the survey identified chewing gum, oral spray, tinctures and patches as their favorite formats.

Some formats significantly declined in popularity between 2009 and 2020. Fortified or functional beverages that deliver nutrients were down 48% over the decade. Ray emphasized the decline is not for all fortified beverages as the category remains popular, but for those delivering specific nutrients.

After functional beverages, other declining growth formats include patches (44%), dissolving strips (43%), nutrition bars (10%) and lozenges (8%), according to NMI.

Delivery format can be a priority in a firm's VMS market strategy, such as Church & Dwight Co. Inc.'s entry into the space by acquiring the marketer of vitafusion and L'Il Critters gummy multivitamins and supplements. (Also see "Church & Dwight Shapes Potential OTC Play On Gummy Format" - HBW Insight, 9 Nov, 2015.)

Format also is key to growing products sales in the OTC drug market. In addition to brand name product marketers extending their lines with more format choices for consumers, manufacturers of generic equivalents of those products regularly submit to the FDA applications to introduce additional formats for already approved drug formulations. (Also see "OTC Decisions August-October: More Providers Enter Diclofenac, Lansoprazole, Loratadine Markets" - HBW Insight, 2 Nov, 2020.)

However, the FDA also has cautioned firms about extending a product brand too far with additional delivery formats and formulations and potentially confusing consumers about the intended use of some OTC products. (Also see "US FDA: User-Error Risks Grow When OTC Brands Extend With Different Ingredients, Indications" - HBW Insight, 9 Dec, 2020.)