

Hearty growth for Gastro-Intestinal remedies

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With a glut of Christmas parties now just days away, many of us will soon find ourselves feeling the effects of the inevitable festive overindulgence. This time of year is prime time for the Gastro-Intestinal (GI) remedies market, but beyond Christmas, latest research from MINTEL shows changing British lifestyles have meant that we now spend more on these products than ever before. Indeed, over the last five years the market for GI remedies has seen a substantial 26% growth, with sales set to hit Â£245 million this year. What is more, sales will see even faster growth over the coming five years, with the market forecast to reach Â£328 million by 2011, up 34% on 2006 figures.

"This market has seen substantial growth as a result of the British public's increasingly dysfunctional relationship with food and diet. While rising affluence and more frequent travel abroad have fuelled an interest in foreign, often spicy food, as well as richer meals offered on the tables of fine dining restaurants, Britain has simultaneously seen rising demand for takeaways and fast food, often high in fat and low in nutritional value. All this and the rise of binge drinking have lead to high levels of obesity in the British population, which in turn can lead to digestive problems and a greater need for GI remedies," comments David Bird, senior market analyst at MINTEL.

Although indigestion and heartburn remedies make up the largest share (50%) of the GI remedies market, MINTEL records the greatest level of growth in laxatives, with some of this growth accounted for by those willing to take them as a quick fix weight loss programme. Laxatives have seen 33% growth over the last five years, with an increase of almost 50% expected in the coming five years.

"On the flip side of over-eating in Britain, we have seen a pre-occupation with under-eating and perpetual dieting, with the debate of heroin chic and most recently the size zero celebrities and models still raging unabated in the media," comments David Bird.

Not all laxative purchases will be made in an attempt to lose weight (older people often suffer from constipation and with an ageing population, laxatives are naturally set to see rising sales) but there is little doubt that this has played a key part in the market's growth.Â

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