

The Balchem Beat

Issue 37
May / June 2026



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Better-for-You Innovation
at IFT FIRST 2026**

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Choline and Brain Function
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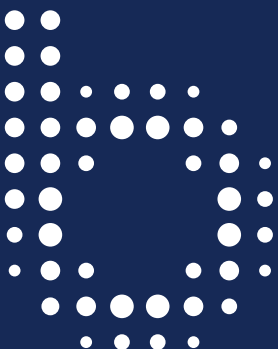
Our Latest White Paper:
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Discover Where Indulgence
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Today's consumers expect more

from every bite and sip — better nutrition, functional benefits, and a great sensory experience, all at once.

Editor's Note

Dear Balchem Community,

Walk down any store aisle today, and "better-for-you" is everywhere — but what does it actually mean? It's no longer just about reducing sugar or adding protein. Today's consumers expect **more from every bite and sip — better nutrition, functional benefits, and a great sensory experience, all at once.**

In this issue of Balchem Beat, we explore how that shift is redefining innovation across categories. At **IFT FIRST 2026**, we'll bring these ideas to life — showcasing functional beverages and high-protein concepts designed to deliver both performance and indulgence. If you're attending, we'd love to see you there.

We also highlight the science-powering next-generation solutions. From new research on **choline and brain health during menopause** to emerging insights into **epigenetics and methylation**, the focus is on targeted, life-stage nutrition backed by credible science.

Meanwhile, across snacks, bakery, and beverages, expectations continue to rise. Consumers want **protein, fiber, clean labels, and engaging textures** — and in beverages, a clear shift toward **targeted, functional benefits** is shaping the next wave of innovation.

Bringing all of this together takes more than great ingredients. It takes **expertise, precision, and the right partner.** At Balchem, we're here to help you turn these trends into real-world solutions — designed to deliver, and built for what's next.

Thanks for reading, and as always, we look forward to continuing the conversation.

Warm regards,
Balchem Beat Editorial Team



Balchem to Showcase **Better-for-You Innovation** at IFT FIRST 2026

Balchem is heading to Chicago this July for IFT FIRST 2026, where the team will bring to life our latest ingredient innovations and formulation expertise at **booth 1407**.


This year's presence will spotlight how we are helping customers meet the growing demand for better-for-you products that deliver both strong nutrition and great taste. Attendees will be able to sample functional beverages and high-protein snack concepts, including formulations featuring our new Milk **Protein Z-Crisps**[®], designed to enhance texture, flavor, and the overall eating experience.

Across the booth, our portfolio will demonstrate how Balchem solutions support real-world product development. From **MeatShure**[®] technology for efficient, protein-rich meat snacks to **INjoy**[™] beverage systems that simplify formulation and ensure consistent sensory performance, we're showing what's possible when science meets application.

We'll also highlight **VitalBlend**[™], offering customizable nutrient delivery through lipid-based powders tailored to specific health needs and applications.

In addition to product sampling, Balchem experts will take the stage at the Taste of Science area to share practical formulation insights with attendees.





On **July 13 at 1:00 PM**, the session **“Formulating Better-for-You Indulgence in High Protein, High Fiber Applications”** will explore how spray-dried lipid powders can enhance taste, texture, and functionality, helping brands create indulgent products with improved nutritional profiles.

On **July 14 at 1:30 PM**, the second session, **“Simplifying Beverage Innovation: Beverage Systems Built for Fast-Moving Markets,”** will focus on how systems-based approaches can reduce formulation complexity while delivering consistent sensory results across beverage applications.

These sessions reinforce Balchem’s role as a trusted partner in translating science into scalable, consumer-ready solutions.

With consumer demand continuing to rise for convenient, better-for-you foods and beverages, IFT FIRST provides an important platform to demonstrate how Balchem is enabling brands to innovate with confidence.

Request a meeting:
[balchem.com/events/ift-first-2026](https://www.balchem.com/events/ift-first-2026)



New UVM Research Highlights **Choline and Brain Function in Menopause**

As women transition through menopause, declining estrogen levels can reduce the body's natural ability to produce choline, an essential nutrient for brain health. This shift increases reliance on dietary intake and supplementation at a time when cognitive concerns such as memory, focus, and mental clarity are becoming more prominent. Yet despite its importance, choline intake remains inadequate for most women. Together, these trends highlight an opportunity for innovation in women's health and cognitive support.

Balchem continues to advance its leadership in science-backed nutrition with new clinical research from the University of Vermont (UVM), investigating the role of choline in brain function among postmenopausal women. This study contributes valuable human data to a growing body of evidence reinforcing choline's importance across the lifespan.

UVM conducted a randomized, double-blind pilot study designed to detect changes in brain activity. Participants received a single dose of **VitaCholine®** (1650 mg choline as choline bitartrate) or placebo, followed by functional MRI (fMRI) assessment during a working memory task.

Results demonstrated that choline supplementation significantly altered brain activation patterns during the more demanding working memory condition.



Choline supplementation significantly **altered brain activation patterns** during the more demanding working memory condition.



Compared to placebo, choline resulted in decreased activation in specific regions of the right temporal lobe. This reduced activation may indicate greater neural efficiency (less activation required to perform the same task). Choline supplementation also expanded functional connectivity between the right planum temporal and a broader working memory network during the higher memory load condition, suggesting an effect on how brain regions communicate during cognitively demanding tasks.

Together, these findings indicate that choline plays a meaningful role in supporting brain function in postmenopausal women.

As awareness around menopause and cognitive health continues to grow, so does the need for effective, science-driven nutritional support. The UVM study represents an important step forward, deepening our understanding of how choline supports brain function and reinforcing the importance of choline for next-generation women's health solutions.

Read the full study here:
Oral Choline Reduced Working Memory-Related Brain Activation in Postmenopausal Women: A Pilot Study
balchem.com/hnh/benefits/brain-health/choline-for-cognition



 **VitaCholine**[®]





64%

of consumers are actively
trying to increase **fiber intake**

What's Next in Sweets & Snacks?

The Rise of Better-for-You Indulgence

As consumers become more health conscious, and as factors like **GLP-1** continue to influence eating habits, they are increasingly seeking sweet snacks that align with dietary preferences such as gluten-free, plant-based, or reduced sugar, while still delivering added benefits like protein and fiber.¹

This shift is accelerating innovation across sweets and snacks, especially as protein moves into more indulgent formats. In fact, launches featuring protein and at least one health claim have grown by +42% globally.²

At the same time, gut health is gaining traction, with 64% of consumers actively trying to increase fiber intake, driving increased use of functional fiber ingredients like soluble tapioca fiber, acacia, and inulin.³

As these health priorities evolve, expectations around indulgence are also shifting. Consumers are looking for more engaging, multi-dimensional experiences, combining rich flavor with layered textures such as smooth, crunchy, and chewy, to elevate everyday snacking moments.

Equally important is transparency. Clean labels have become non-negotiable, with 34% of US consumers saying they motivate trial, putting pressure on brands to deliver simple, transparent formulations while navigating evolving regulatory requirements.⁴

Together, these trends are reshaping product development, requiring solutions that deliver function, texture, and indulgence in balance.

At Balchem, our portfolio is designed to bring this balance to life. **Protein Z-Crisps®** can add a light, crunchy texture while adding protein, supporting both sensory appeal and nutrition goals. Our **spray-dried lipid powders** enable the inclusion of vitamins, minerals, and fiber, while our texturants can help optimize consistency across BFY and portion-controlled applications.

Connect with us to get started!
balchem.com/contact

References:

- [1] SPINS, The Next Generation of Consumers (2025)
- [2] Innova Market Insights. Top Global Trends 2026 in Sweets & Snacks. 2026
- [3] IFIC Food & Health Survey, 2025
- [4] Mintel. The Future of the American Pantry. 2026.



Balchem Human Nutrition & Health
is proud to introduce **our latest white paper**

Epigenetic Health & DNA Methylation: A Lifespan Framework for Product Innovation, and a Deep Dive into One of the Most Compelling Areas of Modern Nutrition Science

Epigenetics is transforming how we understand human health, with DNA methylation emerging as a foundational process that regulates gene expression and supports cellular function across the lifespan. What makes this science especially powerful is its relevance from early development to healthy aging, offering a unified, science-backed platform for innovation.

For today's formulators and brand leaders, this represents a clear opportunity. Consumer demand is shifting toward more targeted, functional solutions, yet critical nutrient gaps remain. Only 12% of Americans meet recommended choline intake, and nearly one in six fall short on folate.¹ These gaps highlight the need for advanced formulations that go beyond basic nutrition to directly support methylation and cellular health.

The white paper outlines how methylation plays an essential role during key life stages. In early development, it helps regulate gene expression and supports critical processes like brain and neural development. Across adulthood and into aging, methylation continues to support DNA stability, cellular resilience, and overall health. As the global population ages and interest in healthy aging grows, targeting these mechanisms becomes increasingly important.

Central to this approach is the concept of the "methyl pool", the body's supply of methyl groups derived from essential nutrients. Maintaining this pool is critical for processes ranging from DNA synthesis to neurotransmitter production. Folate, choline, and MSM each play important and complementary roles in supporting one-carbon metabolism and ensuring sufficient methyl group availability.

Only **12%**
of Americans meet the
recommended **choline intake**.

Epigenetic health is not just an emerging concept, it is a powerful, scalable **platform for innovation.**



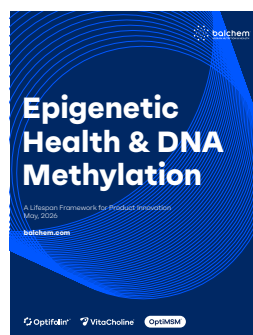
Balchem's portfolio is uniquely positioned to bring this science to life. **Optifolin+**® represents a next-generation approach to folate, enhancing L-5-MTHF with choline for methylation support. **VitaCholine**® continues to set the standard for high-quality choline, backed by clinical research and designed to support brain health and cellular function. **OptiMSM**® adds a new dimension, with emerging research highlighting its role as a methyl donor and its impact on gene expression and recovery.

Together, these solutions enable formulators to overcome common technical challenges while delivering meaningful, science-backed benefits in categories such as prenatal nutrition, cognitive health, sports nutrition, and healthy aging.

Reference:
[1] USDA, Agricultural Research Service, 2023. Usual Nutrient Intake from Food and Beverages, by Male/Female and Age, What We Eat in America, NHANES 2017–March 2020 Prepandemic.

Epigenetic health is not just an emerging concept, it is a powerful, scalable platform for innovation. By focusing on methylation and one-carbon metabolism, brands can unlock new opportunities to differentiate, create value, and deliver measurable impact across the lifespan.

Discover how Balchem is helping to shape the future of nutrition, and how **every methyl counts.**



Epigenetic Health & DNA Methylation Whitepaper — Balchem





Discover Where **Indulgence Meets Quality**

Cakes and cookies have long been the heart of celebration, comfort, and everyday indulgence. But today's consumers are asking for more — seeking baked goods that not only delight the senses but also align with evolving wellness goals, including those influenced by **GLP-1** lifestyles. The expectation is clear: deliver exceptional flavor, consistent texture, and thoughtful formulation without compromise.

At Balchem we bring these promises to life through innovative ingredient systems designed to elevate every bite.

Flavor That Delivers

Authentic, indulgent flavor remains the cornerstone of great baked goods. Our **INhance™** Inclusions are crafted to provide the vibrant taste, visual appeal, and texture contrast that consumers crave. From rich cinnamon pieces to fruit flavored inclusions, these solutions ensure that every product feels like a real treat — no matter the formulation challenges.

Preservation You Can Trust

Maintaining freshness and quality is essential, especially as formulations evolve to meet diverse dietary preferences such as dairy-free, egg-free, and reduced-sugar options. Our microencapsulation technology is designed with stability and shelf life in mind, helping brands deliver products that stay fresher longer while maintaining their intended sensory experience.

Leavening That Performs

Texture is everything in baked goods — and it starts with reliable leavening. **BakeShure®** Encapsulated Leavening Systems provide controlled release for consistent rise, volume, and crumb structure. The result is dependable performance across a wide range of formulations, even those with functional or alternative ingredients.

With Balchem as your partner you can confidently create baked goods that balance indulgence with innovation — ensuring that everyone can enjoy a slice of happiness. Get inspired by **TrenDish™** and explore what's next in **Bakery, Beverage, Frozen Desserts, and Meat Snacks.**



From Hydration to Function: The New Era of Beverage Innovation

Global beverage innovation continues to accelerate, with over **300,000 new product launches recorded between 2021 and 2025**, reflecting sustained momentum across categories. Product launches have steadily increased year over year, reaching more than **67,000 launches in 2025**, highlighting both the opportunity and the intensifying competition in the space.

Much of this activity is concentrated within established categories such as coffee, tea, juices, and carbonates — areas already saturated with innovation. This concentration underscores a critical reality: **standing out now requires more than flavor or format — it demands functional differentiation.**



Resources:
Innova Market Insights – Global Beverage Launch Activity (2021–2026)
Mintel Functional Drinks – US – 2024
Nielsen – Functional Claims Performance Data

That differentiation is increasingly being driven by **functional benefits**, which have moved from niche to mainstream. In the US, consumer interest in functional beverage claims remains strong, with **hydration leading at 69% in 2024**, followed closely by calming/relaxation (60%), immune support (59%), and beauty-related benefits (50%).

At the same time, the nature of functionality is evolving. Beverages are shifting away from generic hydration messaging toward **targeted, outcome-driven benefits**—particularly in areas such as energy, digestion, and cognitive or mind-body performance. In contrast, broader wellness or electrolyte-only claims are showing signs of stagnation or decline.

The takeaway for brands is clear: **clarity and credibility matter.** Products that successfully communicate not just what they deliver, but why it matters and how it works, are gaining traction—from shelf presence to consumer engagement.

As competition intensifies, the next wave of innovation will be defined by **science-backed functionality, differentiated positioning, and meaningful health outcomes**—creating a significant opportunity for brands to lead with purpose and precision.

Between 2021 and 2025

300,000

new beverage products were
launched globally.





New Clinical Study Uncovers Potential K2VITAL™ **Post-Exercise Neuromuscular Signaling in Older Adults**



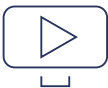
protocol, followed by assessments of muscle strength, soreness and function, as well as blood tests for biomarkers of muscle damage and inflammation.

Examination of the full participant group did not find any significant effects; however, subgroup analysis of the older adults suggested some age-specific responses. Participants aged 65+ receiving vitamin K2 MK-7 showed improved neuromuscular signaling, which supports nerve-muscle communication that helps maintain muscle control. These effects were not observed in the placebo group. The findings of the study suggest that Balchem’s K2VITAL can help support both neuromuscular activation and signaling in older adults after exercise.

Muscular Effects of Vitamin K2 MK-7 in Older Adults

This double-blind, randomized, controlled trial included 71 healthy participants, 35 younger adults (18-40 years) and 36 older adults (65+ years). Participants received either 240µg/day vitamin K2 MK-7 (K2VITAL™) or placebo for 12 weeks. Before and after supplementation, participants took part in a resistance exercise

Read more here: balchem.com/news/hnh-new-clinical-study-k2vital-post-exercise-neuromuscular-signaling-in-older-adults/



Webinar (archive)

Navigating the GLP-1 Disruption: What Future-Ready Leaders Need to Know

GLP-1 is driving new product innovation and “GLP-1 friendly” positioning across food, beverage, and supplements.

This expert-led webinar shows how manufacturers can respond with future-ready strategies. Learn where innovation is heading—from protein-forward concepts to solutions for muscle preservation, hydration, and nutrient gaps—plus emerging opportunities in functional beverages, healthy snacking, and dietary supplements.

Balchem is joined by Ernst & Young, a leading global professional services and consulting firm, to share a market outlook and priority opportunity areas.



Watch recording here: [Navigating the GLP-1 Disruption: What Future-Ready Leaders Need to Know](#)





Events
Ahead

The
**Balchem
Beat**

Events — See You There

16—18
JUNE 2026

Nutriform Business Days
Mandelieu-La Napoule, France

17—19
JUNE 2026

International Society of Sports Nutrition
Fort Lauderdale, FL

28—3
JUNE JULY
2026 2026

Microbial One-Carbon Metabolism — Gordon Research Conference
Waterville Valley, New Hampshire

8—10
JULY 2026

Growth Asia Summit
Marina Bay Sands, Singapore

13—15
JULY 2026

IFT First
Chicago, IL

25—28
JULY 2026

Nutrition 2026
Washington DC

27—30
JULY 2026

NBJ Summit
Terranea Resort Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

4—6
AUG 2026

FI South America
São Paulo, Brazil

9—14
AUG 2026

Icomst
Daejeon, South Korea

12
AUG 2026

Optifolin+ / SupplySide Supplement Journal Editorial Intensive Webinar — Menopause Matters
Online Webinar

29—2
AUG SEPT
2026 2026

AOAC International
Indianapolis, IN

Schedule a meeting with us here:



Podcast

Balchem Voices Lead the Conversation on the **Importance of Bioactive Folate and Prenatal Health** on **Holistic Pregnancy Podcast**

Lauren Eisen, Sr. Strategic Marketing and Business Development Manager for Optifolin+ and **Dr. Eric Ciappio**, PhD, RD Sr. Manager of Nutrition Science join **Taylor Shaffer** on the Holistic Pregnancy Podcast to discuss the importance of folate, MTHFR and prenatal health.

In the **April episode** they break down **what folate does, why the form matters, and how it impacts methylation and fetal development.**

Folate, MTHFR & Prenatal Health on the **Holistic Pregnancy Podcast**
April 7, 2026 (47 min)



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Contact us at
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