

Fish skin and watermelon seeds: health foods for 2020

Callan Boys

“Wellness has never been more popular,” says nutritionist Rick Hay. “I’ve been in the business for 25 years and I’ve never seen more people into health as they are now.”

Boosted by an ageing population, social media and increased consumer awareness around nutrition, the global health and wellness market is estimated to be worth \$US4.2 trillion.

Consumer willingness to spend more money on supplements and “superfoods” has also contributed to growth in the wellness sector, but dietitians warn against buying products hawking health benefits without proper scientific backing.

“If you’re spending \$100 on a product and you’re not really sure if it works, you’re better off using that money to buy lots of fruit, vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains,” says Joel Feren, spokesman for the Dietitians Association of Australia.

Here’s a guide to five health foods on the rise in 2020.

BROCCOLI SPROUTS

Raw sprouts are enjoying new life as a so-called superfood thanks to a high concentration of vitamins and minerals across different varieties. One of the most popular is the broccoli sprout with its large amount of sulforaphane. Fans claim sulforaphane can help slow the ageing process, reduce inflammation and promote brain health. “If people want to eat broccoli sprouts on a sandwich, I think that’s great,” says Feren. “Just don’t think a handful of broccoli sprouts once a day will lead to eternal health.”



CAULIFLOWER FLOUR

Vegetable-based flours are on the rise and cauliflower flour, especially, has an increasing market presence. Lorraine Sarayeldin launched PomPom Paddock cauliflower flour in October, responding to more Australians identifying as gluten intolerant.

“Cauliflower is quite flavour neutral, which makes the flour mix a great cup-for-cup replacement for plain flour,” she says. “The mix also contains brown rice flour, quinoa flour, psyllium husk and sorghum so it can perform like a traditional flour.” PomPom is available in selected health food stores and online, at \$12.99 for 340 grams.

The brand’s next range of cauliflower products will include a pancake mix and pizza base. “Certainly, cauliflower is a good source of fibre and vitamin C, but I reckon let cauliflower be cauliflower,” says Feren. “You can already steam it, bake it and grill it.”

Going nuts for health: a selection of nut and seed butters, above; Kakadu plums, right; and broccoli sprouts, left.

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COLLAGEN SHAKES

Collagen is a structural protein and typically the main component of connective tissue such as bone cartilage and tendons. It’s found naturally in foods such as egg whites, fish and animal bones, and spruikers of collagen rich products suggest intake will fight wrinkles, improve digestion and increase muscle mass. Collagen powders, such as The Beauty Shake made from sustainably farmed fish skin, are particularly big business. “Japan has been using marine collagen for many years,” says Beauty Shake creator Dr Jaroslav Blazek, who completed his PhD in food science at the University of Sydney. “I looked into marine collagen to see if it was another mythical ‘miracle’ treatment, but found there’s a lot of science that shows its benefits.” The chocolate flavoured Beauty Shake costs \$69.90 for 750 grams (or 20 serves). Feren says there is some emerging evidence



that shows collagen supplements may help with exercise related joint pain and osteoarthritis. “However, and this a dietitian’s favourite saying, more research needs to be done before we can say take it or leave it.”

KAKADU PLUM

Feren says the native Kakadu plum has a high amount of vitamin C plus high levels of vitamin E, iron, calcium, folate and magnesium. “It really does pack a nutritional punch.” The Northern

Australia Aboriginal

Kakadu Plum Alliance is a consortium of

Indigenous enterprises

established in 2018

to ethically process Kakadu plum (also known as gubinge) across the country.

As a result, home cooks and chefs are

now discovering more uses for the sour-sweet

fruit (jams and chutneys are popular) while dried Kakadu plum

is finding its way into smoothies, protein balls and slices.

NUT AND SEED BUTTERS

Butters made from seeds and nuts are the hot new cousins of alternative non-dairy “milks”. “Most seeds are going to contain a lot of nutrients, so seed butters aren’t a bad way to go for health,” says Hay. Peanut butter is now joined by cashew, almond and macadamia spreads and – for anyone with a nut allergy – watermelon, pumpkin and sunflower seed butters. “Nut and seed butter can be very nutritious, but consumers should be mindful about what else is included in the butter such as added sugar and oil,” says Feren. “I recommend products that are 100 per cent nut or seed based.”