

September 22, 2025

“With flu cases spiking and hydration top-of-mind, October marks the start of a critical window for beverage brands to capture wellness-driven demand. Consumers are actively choosing functional and immunity-supporting drinks, and brands that show up early and visibly across key channels are positioned to drive incremental sales and seasonal relevance.”



Chris Costagli
Vice President,
Thought Leadership
F&B Insights Lead,
NielsenIQ

Women are embracing holistic health³:

- 44% prefer alternative medicines over traditional varieties
- 60% believe herbal supplements are effective
- 45% trust homeopathic medicine
- 56% are incorporating more alternative medical care

Here’s what industry experts are saying:

“As flu season approaches, maintaining a strong immune system is crucial for warding off illness. Food plays a significant role in influencing our immune system. Every bite we take either promotes or worsens our health outcomes, making food a powerful component of our daily exposures.” ⁴

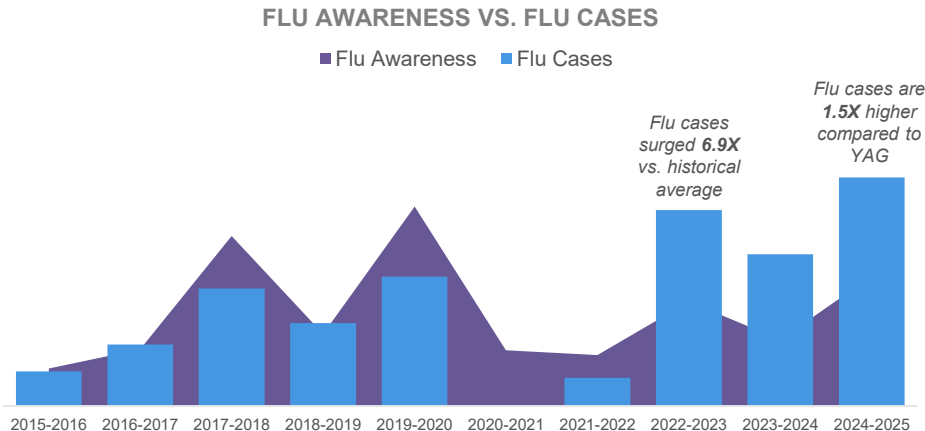
April Wilson, MD, MPH, FACPM
Chair of Preventative Medicine,
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October ignites flu-driven beverage demand

Implications for beverage manufacturers

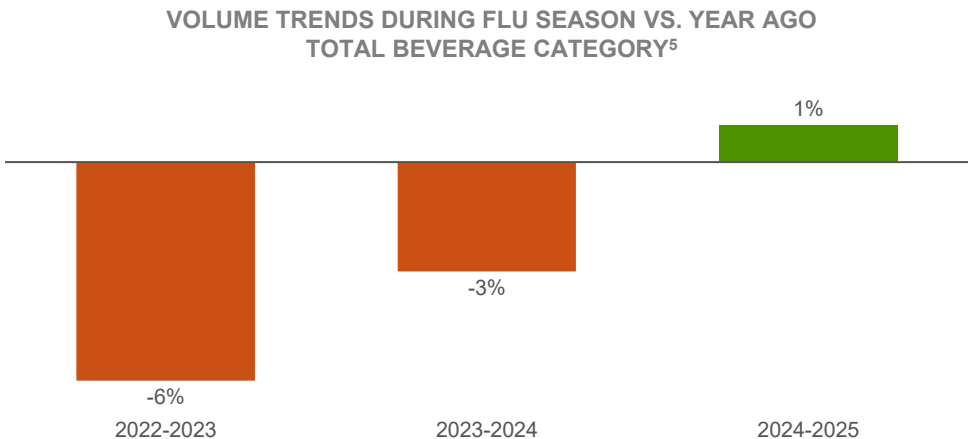
Factor flu season trends and adapt strategies

With flu cases 6.9x above the historical average and 1.5x higher than last year², the season is notably more severe—driving heightened awareness¹ and shifting beverage demand. Manufacturers should respond by prioritizing functional, immunity-supporting, and hydration-focused offerings to meet evolving consumer needs.



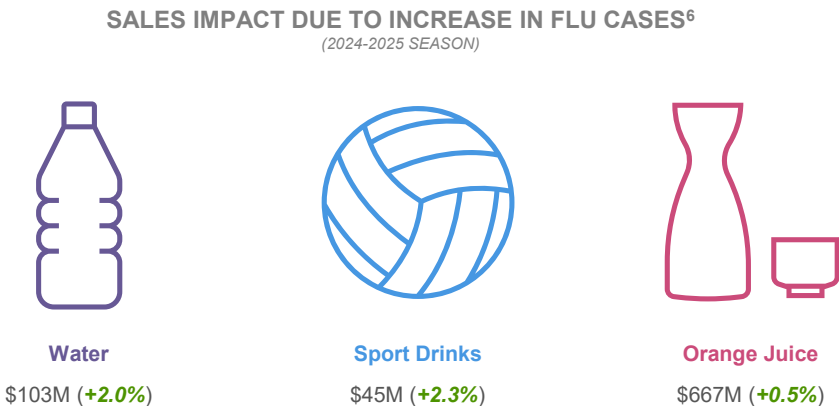
Flu-driven demand is a hydration-led opportunity

Total Beverage saw a seasonal rebound following a surge in flu cases, revealing an opportunity to activate flu-driven demand through targeted portfolio and messaging strategies. Despite recent recession-related declines, improved volume trends during flu season suggest illness incidence may positively influence category performance.



October kickstarts flu season beverage demand

Flu season drives demand for hydration products like Water and Sports Drinks as consumers seek wellness support. To capture seasonal lift, manufacturers should prioritize visibility—especially in Drug and Mass channels—starting in October. Positioning these categories as wellness solutions can boost sales and relevance during peak illness months.



Industry Analysis Sources: ¹Google Trends. (n.d.). Search interest for “flu” and “number of positive influenza tests” in the United States over the past 5 years. Retrieved September 22, 2025, from <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=today%205-y&geo=US&q=flu,number%20of%20positive%20influenza%20test>; ²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025, March 7). Weekly US Influenza Surveillance Report: Key Updates for Week 9, ending March 1, 2025. Retrieved September 22, 2025, from <https://www.cdc.gov/fluview/surveillance/2025-week-09.html>; ³MRI Simmons, 2024 Q4 Trending Topics Study; ⁴Smith, M. (2023, November 21). The power of food as medicine during flu season. Loma Linda University Health News. Retrieved September 22, 2025, from <https://news.llu.edu/health-wellness/power-of-food-medicine-during-flu-season>; ⁵NIQ, Retail Measurement Services, Full View Measurement, Week Ending 3/8/2025; ⁶NIQ, Advanced Analytics, Regression Analysis Studying Relationship Between Sales Trends And Flu Cases
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