

Nutraceuticals

Nutraceuticals play a defining role in fighting and mitigating diseases and disorders related to lifestyles. These foods contain dietary ingredients that help maintain a healthy lifestyle and can even cure some diseases.

Nutraceutical products are derived from foods containing the essential components, like functional foods, which have therapeutic effects. Its beneficial components can be isolated and purified from plant, animal, or marine sources. Nutraceuticals have attracted international interest and shaped a growing global market. Nutraceuticals have led to intense controversy due to the fact they blur the conventional dividing line between diet and medicine.

When the food constituent helps in disease/disorder prevention and/or medication the food may be used as a nutraceutical. Supplemented dairy foods (for example, milk has a nutrient, and its pharmaceutical product is casein) and citrus fruit (orange juice has a nutrient, and its pharmaceutical constituent is ascorbic acid) are examples of nutraceuticals.

Dr. Stephen DeFelice coined the term (nutraceutical) in the year 1989. A hybrid of nutrients and pharmaceuticals underscores the crossroads between the food and pharmaceutical industries. Nutraceuticals contain nontoxic food components that can cure or prevent disease or an unhealthy condition. The concept is by no means new. Almost 2000 years ago, the Greek physician, the father of medicine, Hippocrates said, “Let your food be your medicine and your medicine be your food.”

Nutraceuticals play an important role in biological processes like cell proliferation, antioxidant defense, and gene expression. Nutraceuticals can delay the aging process and decrease the risk of situations like cancer, heart disease, hypertension, excessive weight, high cholesterol, diabetes, osteoporosis, arthritis, insomnia, cataracts, constipation, indigestion, and many other lifestyle-related disorders.