

Role of FOSHU (Food for Specified Health Uses) for Healthier Life

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Proper combination of diet, exercise and rest is important for healthier life. Concerning diet in particular, proper balance of nutrient intake and avoidance of its excess or deficiency are essential to keep good health and thus, not to induce risks leading to lifestyle-related diseases. Even nutrients and functional ingredients in foods are chemical substances but we need to draw a line of demarcation between such substances based on long history of dietary habits and novel substances and/or xenobiotics. However, even FOSHU contains highly purified or concentrated functional ingredients present in ordinary foods and thus, it is very important to take safety issues into consideration.

FOSHU is the only type of food product (not ingredients) that can carry health claims and is composed of functional ingredients that affect the structure/function (physiological functions) of the body. These food products are intended to be consumed for the maintenance/promotion of health or special health uses by people who wish to control specified health conditions, such as gastro-intestinal conditions and blood pressure. Therefore, FOSHU products target healthy people and/or people in a preliminary stage of a disease or a borderline condition. When the products are manufactured or distributed, permission or approval from the government is required after rigorous evaluation of the safety and effectiveness of proposed specified health uses. To understand the outline overall, comprehensive knowledge on maintaining health is required, i.e. structure/function of human body, pathogenesis of diseases, role of dietary life, nutrients and their metabolism etc., as well as understanding mechanisms of the effectiveness of FOSHU, which ranges over pharmacology, medicine, and food and nutrition.