



Safety, quality and convenience with baby food powders

Demand for baby food powders is growing, driven by consumer concerns over food safety and hygiene and a desire for options that deliver excellent nutrition while fitting in to increasingly busy lifestyles. Join us for an insight into the factors behind the trend, and the opportunities being created for producers.



Baby food powders on the rise

The market for baby food powders – baby formula, infant cereals and flavoured milk – is expanding. Globally, the infant formula market is expected to be worth US\$103.75 billion by the end of 2026, up from \$US45.12 billion in 2018, representing a CAGR of nearly 11%.

The fastest growth is expected to be seen in Asia-Pacific, driven by strong demand in China. This is likely to increase further following the Chinese government's recent decision to abolish its one-child policy.

Growth is also strong in the Middle East and Africa, with projected annual growth in infant formula and baby food of 8.89% and an estimated market size of US\$8.59 billion by 2026. A rise in the number of women going out to work is combined with growing awareness of the nutritional benefits of powdered baby food and increased familiarity with “Western” attitudes and lifestyles, and set against a backdrop of strong economic growth.



The key drivers of growth

1. Safety and hygiene come first

The COVID-19 pandemic has put food safety and hygiene at the forefront of consumers' minds. In research carried out for Tetra Pak by Ipsos in 2020, two-thirds of respondents saw it as a major concern for society, while the same research pointed to a strong link between hygiene, safety and health – another factor driving interest in baby food powders. Powders bring obvious safety and hygiene benefits, including a long shelf-life with no need for refrigeration and helping parents to feel that they are in control of what they are feeding their children. Branded products also offer valuable quality assurance.

2. The growing need for convenience

Post-pandemic, demand for the highest standards of hygiene and safety will go hand

in hand with the need for convenience. With more parents combining work with childcare, there is a need for baby food products that can help to free up time without compromising on quality. The trend is particularly apparent in developing countries, driven by population growth, rising incomes and a marked increase in the number of women in the workplace.

Baby food powders – easy to handle and store, and quick to prepare – offer the ideal solution. Demand for convenience as well as hygiene looks set to drive further developments in both product format and packaging, for example individual “ready to mix” sachets of powder formulas. Producers will need to keep coming up with ever more convenient concepts to keep pace with consumer demand.



Breast feeding is the most preferred form of nutrition for babies up to six months

3. A healthy start

The World Health Organization describes the first 1,000 days of a child's life – roughly from conception to around their second birthday – as “a unique period of opportunity when the foundations of optimum health, growth, and neurodevelopment across the lifespan are established”. As parents become increasingly aware of the impact of good nutrition on their children's growth and development, they are seeking baby food and infant formulas that are rich in proteins, vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates – very often available in powdered form.

Post-COVID, interest has heightened in food and drink products that promise extra health benefits. Manufacturers are responding with new formulations that include nutrients such as probiotics, zinc and DHA. Alongside this, there is a shift away from processed/artificial products towards “clean” ingredient lists and production methods, and organic brands: 27% of all baby milk and food launched in the Middle East in 2020 featured an organic claim, a 12% increase on the previous year.



Innovation in baby food powders

Drilling further down into the category, we can see some distinct trends:

A formula for success

Fortified/enriched products are driving growth in infant formula, with more and more brands adding a range of nutrients to their products in order to deliver added health benefits. These include unique blends of fats and proteins designed to promote brain development, nucleotides to promote eye health and probiotics for a healthy digestive system.

Cereals go green

Cereals are central to the overall baby food and milk category, with more than a quarter of all new products featuring cereals on their list of ingredients. Up to now, though, innovation has been in short supply with producers slow to tap into broader trends. There are clear opportunities in this

space, including using “natural” claims and clean labels to shift the focus away from functional health and showcase transparency and trustworthiness, emphasising products’ appeal to parents looking for wholesome, natural ways to feed their children. There is also scope for producers to expand their audience by “ageing up”: targeting products at younger children as well as babies.

Immunity gets a boost

Sales of food and drink supplements that enhance immunity have soared in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and demand is predicted to spread to the baby food market. As such, baby food and drink brands should be looking to innovate in this area, and to highlight the presence of immunity-boosting ingredients such as vitamins C and E and selenium to increase the appeal of their products to concerned parents.



Flavoured milk powders

The Middle East and Africa is also seeing strong growth in powdered flavoured milk, with CAGR of around 7% between 2020 and 2023. These products are particularly popular with younger children who appreciate the variety of flavours on offer.

Increasingly, consumers are looking to the food and beverage products they buy to provide them with an experience, as well as essential nutrition and hydration. Variety and novelty are key. In response, producers are looking for ways to add value to and premiumise their products, including by continuing to develop new flavours.



Your partner in innovation

With macroeconomic factors and internal market forces set to continue to stimulate demand for baby food powders, particularly in developing countries, the opportunities for producers are significant. With our unparalleled expertise in processing food powders, why not make Tetra Pak your partner in innovation? At our dedicated powder-handling Product Development Centre at Le May-sur-Èvre in France, we've analysed the unique properties and behaviours of thousands of different

powders. Our powder ingredient database – the biggest in the world – now holds the secrets of more than 5,000 powders, and we'd like to share them with you. If you would like to know more, or already have an idea for a new powder product, please get in touch. We can help to turn your ideas into reality.

To find out more, visit our powder handling landing page or contact us for information.