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Capsugel launches new vegetarian capsules with improved stability

By Stephen Daniells, [Contact the editor](#), 08-Mar-2011

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Hard capsule manufacturer leader Capsugel has introduced a new vegetarian capsule with slower opening after swallowing, making it ideal for ingredients with bad taste like valerian root or garlic.

The capsule, being launched at this week's Expo West show in Anaheim, are made from hydroxypropyl methylcellulose (HPMC) and are said to disintegrate more slowly than conventional gelatin or HPMC capsules.

Traditional capsules made from gelatin are known to begin disintegrating immediately, explained Missy Lowery, marketing manager for Capsugel, with complete disintegration observed within approximately 15 minutes.

Capsugel's new DRcaps, however, are "designed to resist disintegration in pH 1.2 (stomach acid) – 100 percent in the first 30 minutes and only about 10 percent in the first 2 hours", she said.

"It is not an enteric coated capsule which would, by USP definition, need to maintain 100 percent non-disintegration in the first two hours," explained Lowery.

Under the conditions of the intestine – pH6.8 - the DRcaps capsule "fully opens", she added.

Cost savings

The innovative capsules may also help cut production costs and time, said the company, since no coating step is required: The capsules do not require the application of chemical coatings to protect ingredients, mask tastes, or postpone the release of active ingredients, said Capsugel.

The capsules also boast a low moisture level, said Capsugel, making them attractive to ingredients such as probiotics. Indeed, in 50 percent relative humidity, the capsules have a moisture level of 4 to 6 percent, compared with 12 to 14 percent for gelatin.

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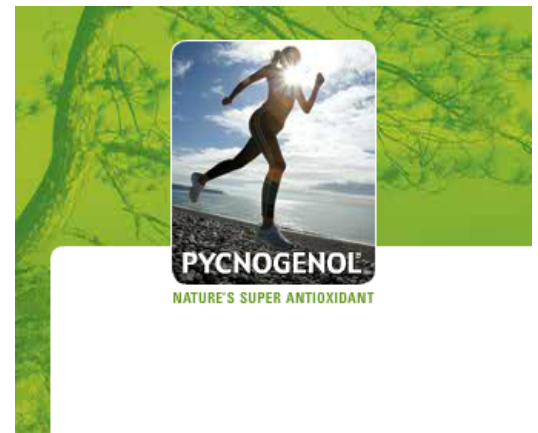
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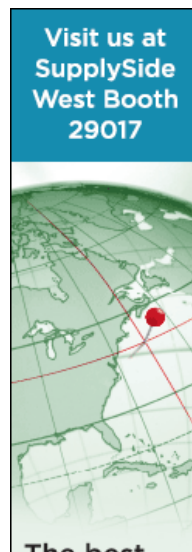
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The company commissioned consumer sensory panel testing to assess the perception of ingredients with a bad aftertaste, and results reportedly showed that the "majority of consumers [...] did not perceive an aftertaste with the DRcaps product", compared with 66 percent aftertaste perception for the tablet version of the same ingredient.

"Our customers have been asking for more innovative dosage forms with protective properties, so we created DRcaps, which is a win-win for both consumers and manufacturers," said Serge Enokian, Capsugel's VP of global marketing.

"In vitro test results suggest that the protective properties of DRcaps should help deliver live cultures and enzymes to the small intestine where they can be most effective," added Enokian. "The fact that DRcaps can minimize the bad aftertaste of some products such as valerian root or garlic provides an added incentive for consumers to stay on their daily regimen."

Lowery told NutraIngredients-USA.com that the capsules are "only designed for powder-filled formulations – not liquids."

"The only powder formulation that would be unsuitable is one intended for immediate release," she added.

Keywords: Capsugel, valerian root, probiotics

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