

## Functional Foods / Health-oriented Foods

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## FOOD MARKET FOR NURSING CARE

**Food Market for Nursing Care****~ Food market for nursing care exceeding 100 billion yen. Potential needs are 2.5 trillion yen ~**

The nursing care food market including elderly food is rapidly expanding. According to a research conducted by Fuji Keizai, the nursing care food market was up 5% from the previous year, reaching a 102 billion yen market in 2012. Nursing care food includes liquid food, soft food, nutritional supplementary food, hydration supplementary food, and thickness adjusting foods. The market is estimated to continue expanding as the elderly population rises. By 2020, it is said to grow 26% from 2012 to a 128.6 billion yen market.

Elderly population of over 65 years old continued to grow each year and currently passed 30 million. Commercial products of soft foods will help seize a business opportunity for elderly who feel that "hard and big foods are difficult to eat." With new entries and expansion of products, each maker is beginning to notice the market is become actualized.

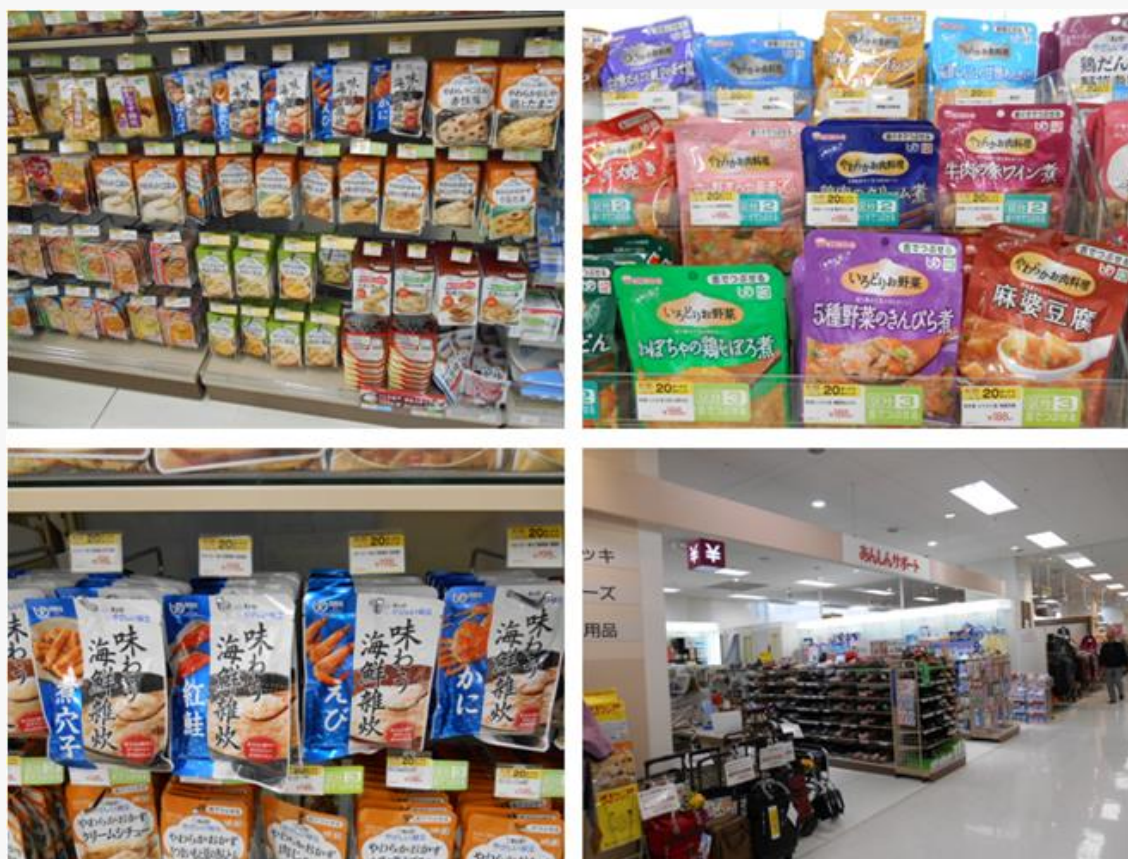
In the future, home use products will capture attention as the market grows. The needs of the nursing care foods calculated from the number of people requiring nursing care is about 2.5 trillion yen. This is calculated by "1380 yen for daily food expenses in nursing care insurance system" x 365 days x 5.06 million people requiring nursing care. Currently, the number of elderly receiving nursing care at home out of those who require nursing care are about 4.22 million. Of this number, about 1.2 million are conducted by family members and this number clearly indicates the potential needs for home use nursing care food.

Obviously, it does not mean that every elderly who are receiving care at home need nursing care food, but it is trouble and time consuming to prepare minced or paste food. Out of the total number of households, 30% are over 65 years old and there are many elders who look after another elder. A system that would promote the benefits and advantages of commercial nursing care foods to not only elders who does nursing care, but also to home helpers would become a key to further market expansion.

There are several barriers to market expansion of home use nursing care foods. There are

many elderly who does not know about nursing care food, and it is necessary to first take business measures to increase the degree of recognition. It is also important to expand the distribution routes. Currently, the main distribution routes are drug stores and mail orders. There are limits to the number of GMs and SMs that handle these products in their food sales counter. The biggest task for market expansion is to secure a place to sell the products.

According to Ito-Yokado, "We have currently about 150 nursing care food items. The selling area is expanding each year. The percentage of nursing care food out of the total amount of sales is increasing. In the future, we want to consider selling frozen nursing care foods that are highly evaluated for its taste by setting refrigeration showcases." Their idea is to have a fulfilling number of items.



Nursing-care products corner at Ito-Yokado in Tokyo

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries invited experts and intellectuals to start a debate on elderly foods, a topic that has never been discussed comprehensively.

- 1) Clarifying the definition of nursing care foods,
- 2) promoting the understanding regarding nutrition for elderly,
- 3) ways to provide nursing care foods,
- 4) spreading nursing care foods,
- 5) developing a social system to utilize nursing care foods.

Since the government has officially begun to work on nursing care foods, there are hopes for the market to pick up speed.