

## GI, antioxidants to lead 2006 health trends, says AC Nielsen

1/31/2006- Foods with a low glycemic index and products containing antioxidants will enjoy good growth this year as consumers continue to *"obsess over their health,"* according to a new study by consumer tracker AC Nielsen.

The market researcher this week published its predictions for 2006, using a combination of purchase data and behavior data to forecast the nation's new health trends.

By tracking product label health claims, AC Nielsen revealed that although an increasing number of products carry labels such as 'low fat' and 'low sodium,' it is low glycemic index (GI) foods that will be most popular this year, continuing on from the *"big jump"* they experienced between 2004 and 2005.

The glycaemic index measures how quickly certain foods release carbohydrates into the body, which then raise consumers' blood glucose levels. High GI foods cause blood sugar levels to rise more rapidly.

Scientific evidence has increased to show low GI foods can help control weight and more certainly, help reduce the risk of diabetes and related conditions by raising blood sugar more steadily. Some health professionals and even food retailers have hailed the GI system as a more sensible version of the low-carb Atkins diet.

And according to AC Nielsen, low GI foods are set to be most popular this year with consumers who tend to neglect their health.

The study revealed that 50 percent of Americans are *"health neglectors,"* who care little about their health and tend to be overweight. This group of consumers loves convenience foods, said the study.

*"Any new food trend needs to get at least some traction among this mainstream group to truly break out,"* said the report.

*"Sales of GI products among the neglectors market segment demonstrated an increase of almost 150 percent from December 2004 to December 2005, which is one of the biggest jumps among all health-related claims. While dollar sales of GI products are relatively small, this signifies the potential emergence of a blockbuster trend to keep an eye on."*

Antioxidants are also set to *"hit the mainstream in a big way,"* with 'health neglectors' consuming 52 percent more antioxidant-containing products year-over-year in the period under review.

*"Health activists,"* an educated, affluent health-aware group with money to buy expensive health foods, also showed an increased interest in antioxidants, according to the report. "Spending on antioxidants in health activists' markets was estimated to be among the highest of all health-related categories in terms of year-over-year growth," said the study, which also revealed that the antioxidant segment is led by liquid tea, with sales for the product up 1000 percent year-over-year. Organic products were also popular with the 'healthy' consumer group, with sales increasing 17 percent per year during the review period.

