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# Food as Medicine (FaM)

## Impulse Presentation

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# About me

- **Industry Experience:** F&B brand in Mumbai and meal delivery/catering services in Singapore
- **Current Focus:** Focusing on the impact of health education on consumer behavior and the long-term evolution of FaM
- **Credentials:**
  - International Board-Certified Lifestyle Medicine Professional
  - Qualified Nutritionist and Food Scientist
  - Publications: *Living PCOS Free: How to regain your hormonal health with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (2022)*



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# What we'll cover

- What's driving the phenomenon of FaM
- Why FaM is here to stay
- Key players in the space
- Challenges ahead





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# Six Pillars of Lifestyle Medicine (LM)

American College of LM defines this as:

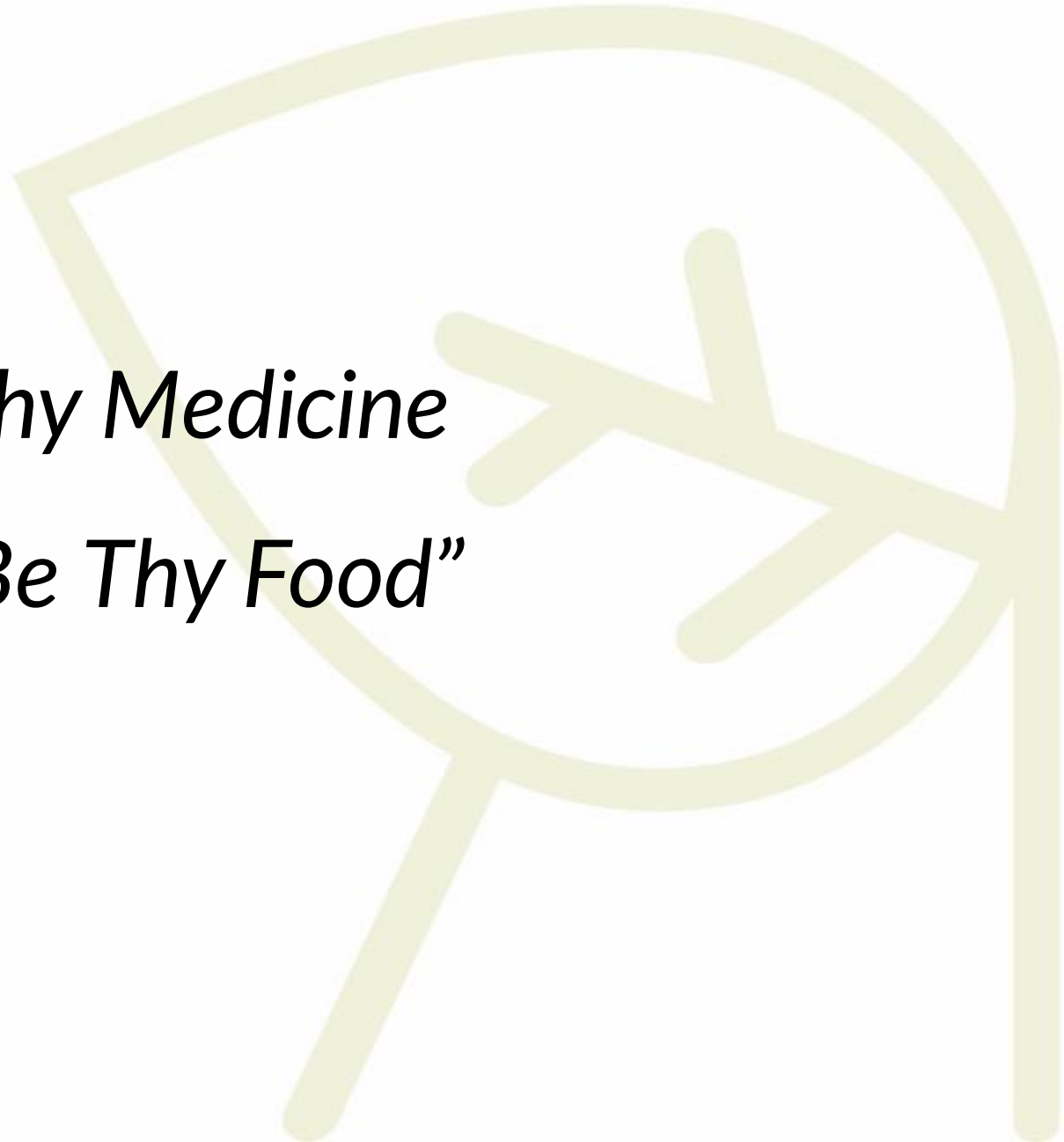
- whole-food, plant-predominant eating pattern
- regular physical activity
- stress management
- avoiding risky substances (limiting alcohol, avoiding tobacco)
- restorative sleep
- social connection





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*“Let Food Be Thy Medicine  
and Medicine Be Thy Food”*





# What's Driving FaM?

- Rising awareness of diet-related chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, etc.)
- Post-COVID-19 interest in holistic health approaches around longevity and healthspan (e.g. move towards personalized nutrition)<sup>1</sup>
- Democratization of health and nutrition information via online search and social media
- Government and healthcare sector advocating around preventative health measures to combat the epidemic of chronic diseases (**1 in 4 deaths globally** linked to unhealthy diet<sup>1</sup>)
- Private payers, particularly insurers, increasingly focused on reducing the costs associated with diet-related diseases.

1 "60% of Americans said the Pandemic changed their approach to food" 2022 McKinsey Report: Hungry and Confused: The Winding Road to conscious eating  
2 GBD 2017 Diet Collaborators (2019). Health effects of dietary risks in 195 countries, 1990-2017: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017. *Lancet*



# What does FaM comprise?

1. **Functional Foods:** Foods enhanced with additional health benefits, such as fortified foods, probiotics (e.g., kefir, kimchi), antioxidant-rich options, and omega-3 fatty acids
2. **Plant-Based Foods:** Growing consumer demand for meat and dairy alternatives, alongside a focus on whole-food plant-based dietary patterns
3. **Nutraceuticals:** Supplements derived from food sources that provide targeted health benefits beyond basic nutrition
4. **Personalized Nutrition:** Dietary solutions that aim to be tailored to an individual's genetic and biochemical profile, offering a more personalized approach to health



# Consumer insights

- **Research:** American Gut Project is a positive example of how research is helping to raise awareness of the important role of dietary fiber for health. Likely to drive increased focus on fiber akin to the attention given to protein over the last decade (prebiotics/ probiotics, personalized nutrition)
- **Measurability:** Consumers are increasingly opting for health analytics, such as continuous glucose monitors (CGMs), even when their insights may not be broadly applicable or actionable for general population
- **Natural vs. Synthetic:** Movement against ultra-processed foods (UPFs) and seed oils reflects an “essentialist” approach to food which can sometimes contradict evidence-based health advice. As a result, consumer confusion is widespread in evolving landscape of nutrition information





# Socio-Economic: Cost and Demographic impact

- 1. Cost Savings:** Dietary interventions (e.g. medically tailored meals) aimed at preventing or managing chronic diseases significantly reduce hospital admissions and long-term treatment costs. The cost of treating lifestyle-related diseases will reach nearly \$300 billion by 2030 (WHO).
- 2. Health Benefits:** According to the EAT-Lancet Commission, transitioning to a planetary health diet could prevent 11 million premature adult deaths each year. This dietary shift represents a reduction of 19-23% in premature deaths globally.

# Case studies: Diet as Policy

**1. Mediterranean Diet:** Widely researched for promoting heart health (Italy integrated Mediterranean diet into national health strategy; Barcelona supported similar initiative at a local level)

**2. Plant-Based Diets:** NYU City Hospitals program has successfully served over 1.2 million plant-based meals since March 2022. Additional benefits of this initiative include a 36% reduction in carbon emissions, cost savings of 59 cents per meal, and a satisfaction rate exceeding 90%

**3. Low Glycemic Diets:** The American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends adopting low glycemic index (GI) foods as an effective strategy for managing blood sugar levels (e.g. oatmeal vs breakfast cereals)





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# Key players in the market

## Functional Foods



## Plant-Based Foods



Nestlé



## Nutraceuticals



## Personalized Nutrition





# Challenges and barriers

- 1. Lack of Regulation and Standardization:** Lack of uniform regulations for functional foods and supplements creates confusion and hampers consumer trust
- 2. Consumer Education:** Widespread misconceptions about efficacy of functional foods and nutraceuticals highlight the need for greater public awareness and reliable evidence-based education
- 3. Affordability and Access:** Making FaM solutions accessible for different populations especially low-income populations/ tailoring for cultural inclusivity and relevance



# Conclusion and key takeaways

- FaM market is experiencing rapid growth and shows immense potential to improve health outcomes and drastically reduce healthcare costs
- Innovation and investment in functional foods and personalized nutrition will be pivotal in shaping the future of healthcare and making FaM solutions more accessible and impactful
- FaM innovators, ranging from large corporations to startups, can take advantage by navigating the regulatory landscape and anticipate emerging trends



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