

Happiest Health summit explores human milk microbiome and precision nutrition

August 12, 2026 | News

The Edge of Nutrition 2026 highlighted research into human milk oligosaccharides, the gut-brain axis and personalised nutrition across the first 1,000 days of life.



Happiest Health's The Edge of Nutrition 2026 brought together nutrition experts, clinicians, researchers and wellness practitioners in Bengaluru to examine emerging research in human milk, the gut microbiome, precision nutrition and the first 1,000 days of life.

Experts at the summit highlighted the role of human milk oligosaccharides, which act as prebiotics that help nourish the developing gut microbiome, alongside emerging research into the human milk microbiome and gut-brain axis.

The discussions focused on how nutrition during pregnancy, breastfeeding and the introduction of complementary foods can influence physical growth, brain development and longer-term health.

Dr Asha Benakappa, Head of Department, Pediatrics, Dr Chandramma Dayananda Sagar Institute of Medical Education and Research, Dayananda Sagar University, said the first 1,000 days represent an important period for establishing the foundations of lifelong health.

"The first thousand days are not simply a window for nutrition—they are an opportunity to build the foundation for a lifetime of health. From conception and maternal nutrition to breastfeeding and the transition to complementary foods, what happens during this period can influence physical growth, brain development and long-term health."

She added that human milk contains human milk oligosaccharides that support the developing gut microbiome, while researchers are beginning to examine the human milk microbiome and its relationship with the gut-brain axis.

The summit also included a panel titled "Nutrition in the Age of Precision Health – Personalised Diets, Gut Genomics & Beyond", which examined the growing role of personalised nutrition.

The panel featured Sheela Krishnaswamy, Registered Dietitian, Independent Nutrition & Wellness Consultant and Former National President of the Indian Dietetic Association; Dr Nandita Iyer, Health Coach and Author; and Aditi Prasad Apte, Senior

Clinical Nutritionist at Aster RV Hospital.

The speakers emphasised that personalised nutrition should begin with an individual's diet, physical activity, sleep, medical and family history, body composition, cultural food habits and health goals rather than relying solely on testing.

They said technologies including genomics, continuous glucose monitoring and microbiome analysis can support personalised nutrition where appropriate, but should complement rather than replace qualified nutrition professionals and clinical judgement.

The panel also cautioned against treating direct-to-consumer microbiome testing as definitive, given the evolving scientific evidence and the dynamic nature of the microbiome.

Raghu Krishnan, CEO – Knowledge Business and Chief Editor at Happiest Health, said the summit aimed to simplify nutrition science and provide evidence-based insights that can be applied in everyday health decisions.

The programme also featured a keynote by Dr Sumathi Swaminathan, Associate Professor of Nutrition at St. John's Research Institute, alongside sessions covering early-life nutrition and broader preventive health.

Benakappa's team is currently conducting research into the human milk microbiome, extending work on how early-life microbial and nutritional factors may influence health beyond infancy.