

DESCRIPTION**NUTRITIONAL COMPOSITION TO PROMOTE HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT
AND GROWTH****TECHNICAL FIELD**

[0001] This disclosure relates generally to the field of nutritional compositions. More particularly, the disclosure relates to a nutritional composition which provides improved digestibility, as compared to conventional compositions.

BACKGROUND ART

[0002] It is well-accepted that the developing infant requires a source of calcium, as part of a nutritionally complete meal. Human breast milk provides sufficient calcium to provide nutritional requirements. However, it is often necessary to provide calcium supplementation to nutritional compositions used as sole source nutrition for infants, in order to provide the desired amount of calcium. Typically, this calcium supplementation takes the form of added calcium lactate, calcium sulfate, calcium chloride, calcium citrate, calcium phosphate, calcium D-saccharate, calcium aspartate, calcium propionate, or combinations thereof.

[0003] While generally sufficient for providing bioavailable calcium, the foregoing calcium salts but when dissociated, the carbohydrate moieties of the foregoing calcium salts are not believed to have a beneficial prebiotic effect, which can be desirable.

[0004] In addition, other factors present in human breast milk are believed to be beneficial to the developing body. For instance, functional proteins such as transforming growth factor-beta (TGF- β) play a significant role in many processes necessary for health and development, in infants and children, as well as adults.

[0005] More specifically, TGF- β is the general name for a family of polypeptides, the members of which have multifunctional regulatory activities. Three differentially regulated mammalian isoforms (termed TGF- β 1, TGF- β 2 and TGF- β 3) play important roles in a multitude of processes in the developing infant, child and adult. TGF- β is a 25-kDa homodimeric cytokine known to mediate pleiotropic functions both within the immune system and systemically, it is expressed in several cell types in the intestinal mucosal including lymphocytes, epithelial cells, macrophages, and stromal cells as well as by T-cells, neutrophils, macrophages, epithelial cells, fibroblasts, platelets,

osteoblasts, osteoclasts and others. In addition, TGF- β is present in human breast milk and may influence multiple aspects of infant health and development.

[0006] Accordingly, it would be beneficial to provide a nutritional formula which provides a combination of nutrients designed to encourage healthy development and growth, especially in an infant. Included in the nutritional formula should be a calcium source which provides sufficient bioavailable calcium while having buffering properties more similar to human milk, as compared to conventional calcium compounds, and advantageously, a prebiotic effect. Additionally, the nutritional formula should be well tolerated in animals, especially human infants and should not produce or cause excess gas, abdominal distension, bloating or diarrhea.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

[0007] Briefly, the present disclosure is directed, in an embodiment, to a nutritional composition comprising a lipid or fat, a protein source, a source of long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids which include docosahexanoic acid (DHA), a source of supplemental calcium which, when dissociated, provides a carbohydrate moiety having prebiotic functionality while providing equivalent calcium bioavailability as compared to the lactate, sulfate, chloride, citrate or saccharate salts of calcium; in a preferred embodiment, the source of supplemental calcium comprises calcium gluconate. In certain embodiments, the calcium source consists solely of calcium gluconate. In embodiments of the nutritional composition of the disclosure, the source of supplemental calcium is present at a level of up to about 2.5% by weight. In other embodiments, the source of supplemental calcium is present in the nutritional composition at a level of up to about 2.0% by weight. In still other embodiments, the source of supplemental calcium is present at a level of at least about 1.0% by weight. The terms "source of supplemental calcium" or "supplemental calcium source," as used herein, means a calcium source, in the form of a salt, which is added to the nutritional composition. The term does not include calcium which is inherent in other components of the nutritional composition.

[0008] The disclosure is also directed to a nutritional composition comprising:

- a. up to about 7 g/100 kcal of a fat or lipid, more preferably about 3 to about 7 g/100 kcal of a fat or lipid;
- b. up to about 5 g/100 kcal of a protein source, more preferably about 1 to about 5 g/100 kcal of a protein source;

c. about 5 to about 100 mg/100 kcal of a source of long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids which include DHA, more preferably about 10 to about 50 mg/100 kcal of a source of long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids which include DHA; and

d. up to about 2.5% by weight of a source of supplemental calcium which, when dissociated, provides prebiotic functionality while providing equivalent bioavailability as compared to the lactate, sulfate, chloride, citrate or saccharate salts of calcium. In some embodiments, the nutritional composition includes about 0.015 to about 0.1 (pg/ μ g) ppm TGF- β , more preferably about 0.0225 to about 0.075 (pg/ μ g) ppm TGF- β .

[0009] In yet another embodiment, the disclosure is directed to a nutritional composition having improved digestibility, the composition comprising a lipid or fat, a protein source, a source of long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids which include docosahexanoic acid (DHA), up to about 2.5% by weight of a calcium source which comprises at least 20% of calcium gluconate, and, optionally, TGF- β .

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

[0010] The technical problem to be solved by the present invention is to provide novel nutritional compositions that are easily digested, provide physiochemical benefits, and/or provide physiological benefits. In an embodiment of the present invention, a nutritional composition comprises a lipid or fat, a protein source, a source of long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids which include docosahexanoic acid (DHA), and a supplemental calcium source which, when dissociated, provides a carbohydrate moiety having prebiotic functionality. In certain embodiments, the calcium source comprises calcium gluconate. More particularly, the composition disclosed herein comprises:

a. up to about 7 g/100 kcal of a fat or lipid, more preferably about 3 to about 7 g/100 kcal of a fat or lipid;

b. up to about 5 g/100 kcal of a protein source, more preferably about 1 to about 5 g/100 kcal of a protein source;

c. about 5 to about 100 mg/100 kcal of a source of long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids which include DHA, more preferably about 10 to about 50 mg/100 kcal of a source of long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids which include DHA;

d. up to about 2.5% by weight of a source of supplemental calcium which, when dissociated, provides a carbohydrate moiety having prebiotic functionality; the source of supplemental calcium preferably has equivalent calcium bioavailability as compared to the lactate, sulfate, chloride, citrate or saccharate salts of calcium, the calcium source advantageously including at least 20% calcium gluconate.

[0011] In some embodiments, the nutritional composition may be an infant formula. As used herein, the term “infant” means a person not more than 12 months of age. The term “infant formula” applies to a composition in liquid or powdered form that satisfies the nutrient requirements of an infant by being a substitute for human milk. In the United States, the content of an infant formula is dictated by the federal regulations set forth at 21 C.F.R. §§100, 106 and 107. These regulations define macronutrient, vitamin, mineral, and other ingredient levels in an effort to simulate the nutritional and other properties of human breast milk. The term “young child” or “young children” as used herein means persons more than 12 months of age up to the age of three years (36 months). The term “child” or “children” as used herein means persons over the age of 3 years and prior to adolescence.

[0012] The compositions may be administered to preterm infants receiving infant formula. As used herein, the term “preterm infants” or “premature infants” means infants born after less than 37 weeks gestation.

[0013] The compositions may, but need not, be nutritionally complete. The skilled artisan will recognize “nutritionally complete” to vary depending on a number of factors including, but not limited to, age, clinical condition, and dietary intake of the subject to whom the term is being applied. In general, “nutritionally complete” means that the nutritional composition of the present invention provides adequate amounts of all carbohydrates, lipids, essential fatty acids, proteins, essential amino acids, conditionally essential amino acids, vitamins, minerals, and energy required for normal growth. As applied to nutrients, the term “essential” refers to any nutrient which cannot be synthesized by the body in amounts sufficient for normal growth and to maintain health and which therefore must be supplied by the diet. The term “conditionally essential” as applied to nutrients means that the nutrient must be supplied by the diet under conditions when adequate amounts of the precursor compound is unavailable to the body for endogenous synthesis to occur.

[0014] The composition which is “nutritionally complete” for the preterm infant will, by definition, provide qualitatively and quantitatively adequate amounts of all carbohydrates, lipids, essential fatty acids, proteins, essential amino acids, conditionally essential amino acids, vitamins, minerals, and energy required for growth of the preterm infant. The composition which is “nutritionally complete” for the term infant will, by definition, provide qualitatively and quantitatively adequate amounts of all carbohydrates, lipids, essential fatty acids, proteins, essential amino acids, conditionally essential amino acids, vitamins, minerals, and energy required for growth of the term infant. The skilled artisan will recognize “term infant” as referring to infants born after at least 37 weeks gestation and, commonly, between 37 and 42 weeks gestation. The composition which is “nutritionally complete” for a child will, by definition, provide qualitatively and quantitatively adequate amounts of all carbohydrates, lipids, essential fatty acids, proteins, essential amino acids, conditionally essential amino acids, vitamins, minerals, and energy required for growth of a child given the specific age and developmental stage of said child.

[0015] The nutritional composition may be provided in any form known in the art, including a powder, a gel, a suspension, a paste, a solid, a liquid, a liquid concentrate, or a ready-to-use composition. In one preferred embodiment, the nutritional composition is an infant formula, especially an infant formula adapted for use as sole source nutrition for an infant. In another embodiment, the nutritional composition is a formula adapted for use as sole source nutrition for preterm infants.

[0016] In the preferred embodiments, the nutritional composition disclosed herein may be administered enterally. As used herein, “enteral” means through or within the gastrointestinal, or digestive, tract, and “enteral administration” includes oral feeding, intragastric feeding, transpyloric administration, or any other introduction into the digestive tract.

[0017] Suitable fat or lipid sources for practicing the present invention may be any known or used in the art, including but not limited to, animal sources, e.g., milk fat, butter, butter fat, egg yolk lipid; marine sources, such as fish oils, marine oils, single cell oils; vegetable and plant oils, such as corn oil, canola oil, sunflower oil, soybean oil, palmolein, coconut oil, high oleic sunflower oil, evening primrose oil, rapeseed oil, olive oil, flaxseed (linseed) oil, cottonseed oil, high oleic safflower oil,

palm stearin, palm kernel oil, wheat germ oil; medium chain triglyceride oils and emulsions and esters of fatty acids; and any combinations thereof.

[0018] Bovine milk protein sources useful in practicing the present invention include, but are not limited to, milk protein powders, milk protein concentrates, milk protein isolates, nonfat milk solids, nonfat milk, nonfat dry milk, whey protein, whey protein isolates, whey protein concentrates, sweet whey, acid whey, casein, acid casein, caseinate (*e.g.* sodium caseinate, sodium calcium caseinate, calcium caseinate) and any combinations thereof.

[0019] In one embodiment, the proteins are provided as intact proteins. In other embodiments, the proteins are provided as a combination of both intact proteins and partially hydrolyzed proteins, with a degree of hydrolysis of between about 4% and 10%. In yet another embodiment, the protein source may be supplemented with glutamine-containing peptides.

[0020] In a particular embodiment of the invention, the whey:casein ratio of the protein source is similar to that found in human breast milk. In an embodiment, the protein source comprises from about 40% to about 80% whey protein. In another embodiment, the protein source may comprise from about 20% to about 60% caseins.

[0021] In some embodiments of the invention, the supplemental calcium source in the nutritional composition comprises calcium gluconate alone or in combination with a calcium source selected from the group consisting of calcium lactate, calcium sulfate, calcium chloride, calcium citrate, calcium phosphate, calcium D-saccharate, calcium aspartate, calcium propionate, and combinations thereof. In a particular embodiment of the invention, the sole supplemental calcium source in the nutritional composition comprises calcium gluconate.

[0022] On dissociation, the carbohydrate moiety of the supplemental calcium source, such as calcium gluconate, provides a prebiotic effect upon conversion to short chain fatty acids in the gut. While not wishing to be bound by this or any other hypothesis, it is believed that the dissociated gluconate from calcium gluconate may provide an enhanced prebiotic effect due to the greater solubility of calcium gluconate as well as serving as a fermentable substrate for selected gut flora ultimately yielding short chain fatty acids. Moreover, the use of calcium gluconate as the supplemental calcium source in a nutritional composition may also provide other physiologically important benefits to the formula-fed infant including but not limited to: formation of

softer curds upon acidification in the human gut; formation of smaller curds upon acidification in the human gut; improvement of digestibility; softer stools; increased rate of gastric emptying which is more similar to the breast-fed infant; the production of a short-chain fatty acid profile in a formula-fed infant that is similar to that produced in a breast-fed infant; increasing of the population and species of beneficial bacteria in the gut of a formula-fed infant, all while providing calcium bioavailability equivalent to that of other sources of supplemental calcium typically used in infant formula.

[0023] In one embodiment of the invention, the nutritional composition may contain one or more probiotics. The term “probiotic” means a microorganism that exerts beneficial effects on the health of the host. Any probiotic known in the art may be acceptable in this embodiment provided it achieves the intended result. In a particular embodiment, the probiotic may be selected from *Lactobacillus* species, *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* GG, *Bifidobacterium* species, *Bifidobacterium longum*, and *Bifidobacterium animalis subsp. lactis* BB-12.

[0024] If included in the composition, the amount of the probiotic may vary from about 10^4 to about 10^{10} colony forming units (cfu) per kg body weight per day. In another embodiment, the amount of the probiotic may vary from about 10^6 to about 10^9 cfu per kg body weight per day. In yet another embodiment, the amount of the probiotic may be at least about 10^6 cfu per kg body weight per day.

[0025] In an embodiment, the probiotic(s) may be viable or non-viable. As used herein, the term “viable”, refers to live microorganisms. The term “non-viable” or “non-viable probiotic” means non-living probiotic microorganisms, their cellular components and/or metabolites thereof. Such non-viable probiotics may have been heat-killed or otherwise inactivated but retain the ability to favorably influence the health of the host. The probiotics useful in the present invention may be naturally-occurring, synthetic or developed through the genetic manipulation of organisms, whether such new source is now known or later developed.

[0026] The nutritional composition may also, in certain embodiments, contain one or more prebiotics. The term “prebiotic” as used herein refers to indigestible food ingredients which exert health benefits upon the host. Such health benefits may include, but are not limited to, selective stimulation of the growth and/or activity of one or a limited number of beneficial gut bacteria, stimulation of the growth and/or

activity of ingested probiotic microorganisms, selective reduction in gut pathogens, and favorable influence on gut short chain fatty acid profile. Such prebiotics may be naturally-occurring, synthetic, or developed through the genetic manipulation of organisms and/or plants, whether such new source is now known or developed later. Prebiotics useful in the present invention may include oligosaccharides, polysaccharides, and other prebiotics that contain fructose, xylose, soya, galactose, glucose and mannose. More specifically, prebiotics useful in the present invention may include lactulose, lactosucrose, raffinose, gluco-oligosaccharide, inulin, polydextrose, polydextrose powder, fructo-oligosaccharide, isomalto-oligosaccharide, soybean oligosaccharides, lactosucrose, xylo-oligosaccharide, chito-oligosaccharide, manno-oligosaccharide, arabin-oligosaccharide, sialyl-oligosaccharide, fuc-oligosaccharide, galacto-oligosaccharide, and gentio-oligosaccharides.

[0027] In an embodiment, the total amount of prebiotics present in the nutritional composition may be from about 1.0 g/L to about 10.0 g/L of the composition. As noted, the total amount of prebiotics present in the nutritional composition may be from about 2.0 g/L and about 8.0 g/L of the composition. At least 20% of the prebiotics should comprise galacto-oligosaccharide.

[0028] In addition to galacto-oligosaccharide, the prebiotic composition can also comprise polydextrose (PDX). If polydextrose is used as a prebiotic, the amount of polydextrose in the nutritional composition may, in an embodiment, be within the range of from about 1.0 g/L to about 4.0 g/L.

[0029] The amount of galacto-oligosaccharide in the nutritional composition may, in an embodiment, be from about 0.2 mg/100 Kcal to about 1.0 mg/100 Kcal. In another embodiment, the amount of galacto-oligosaccharide in the nutritional composition may be from about 0.1 mg/100 Kcal to about 0.5 mg/100 Kcal. If polydextrose is used as a prebiotic, the amount of polydextrose in the nutritional composition may, in an embodiment, be within the range of from about 0.1 mg/100 Kcal to about 0.5 mg/100 Kcal. In another embodiment, the amount of polydextrose may be about 0.3 mg/100 Kcal. In a particular embodiment, galacto-oligosaccharide and polydextrose are supplemented into the nutritional composition in a total amount of about 0.6 mg/100 Kcal.

[0030] The nutritional formulation of the invention contains a source of long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (LCPUFAs) which comprise docosahexanoic acid

(DHA). Other suitable LCPUFAs include, but are not limited to, α -linoleic acid, γ -linoleic acid, linoleic acid, linolenic acid, eicosapentanoic acid (EPA) and arachidonic acid (ARA).

[0031] In one embodiment, the nutritional composition is supplemented with both DHA and ARA. In this embodiment, the weight ratio of ARA:DHA may be from about 1:3 to about 9:1. In one embodiment of the present invention, this ratio is from about 1:2 to about 4:1.

[0032] The amount of long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids in the nutritional composition may vary from about 5 mg/100 kcal to about 100 mg/100 kcal, more preferably from about 10 mg/100 kcal to about 50 mg/100 kcal.

[0033] The nutritional composition may be supplemented with oils containing DHA and ARA using standard techniques known in the art. For example, DHA and ARA may be added to the formula by replacing an equivalent amount of an oil, such as high oleic sunflower oil, normally present in the formula. As another example, the oils containing DHA and ARA may be added to the formula by replacing an equivalent amount of the rest of the overall fat blend normally present in the formula without DHA and ARA.

[0034] If utilized, the source of DHA and ARA may be any source known in the art such as marine oil, fish oil, single cell oil, egg yolk lipid, and brain lipid. In some embodiments, the DHA and ARA are sourced from the single cell Martek oil, DHASCO®, or variations thereof. The DHA and ARA can be in natural form, provided that the remainder of the LCPUFA source does not result in any substantial deleterious effect on the infant. Alternatively, the DHA and ARA can be used in refined form.

[0035] In an embodiment of the present invention, sources of DHA and ARA are single cell oils as taught in U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,374,567; 5,550,156; and 5,397,591, the disclosures of which are incorporated herein in their entirety by reference. However, the present invention is not limited to only such oils.

[0036] In a particular embodiment, the composition of the invention is a milk-based nutritional composition which provides physiochemical and physiological benefits. As is known in the art, bovine milk protein comprises two major components: acid soluble whey protein and acid insoluble casein, with the latter representing about 80% of the total protein content of bovine milk. Upon entering the

acidic environment of the stomach, casein precipitates and complexes with minerals forming semi-solid curds of varying size and firmness. Softer, smaller curds are easier for the body to digest than larger, harder curds. Curd formation may be an important consideration in the development of nutritional compositions, including, but not limited to infant formulas, medical foods, and premature infant formulas. In an embodiment of the present invention, the composition of the invention provides a nutritional composition having softer and smaller curds than standard infant formulas.

[0037] As discussed above, the nutritional composition of the invention also contains TGF- β . In a particular embodiment of the invention, the level of TGF- β in the inventive composition is from about 0.0150 (pg/ μ g) ppm to about 0.1 (pg/ μ g) ppm. In another embodiment, the level of TGF- β in the inventive composition is from about 0.0225 (pg/ μ g) ppm to about 0.0750 (pg/ μ g) ppm.

[0038] In a particular embodiment of the invention, the level of TGF- β in the inventive composition is from about 2500 pg/mL to about 10,000 pg/mL composition, more preferably from about 3000 pg/mL to about 8000 pg/mL.

[0039] In one embodiment, the ratio of TGF- β 1: TGF- β 2 in the inventive composition is in the range of about 1:1 to about 1:20, or, more particularly, in the range of about 1:5 to about 1:15.

[0040] In some embodiments, the bioactivity of TGF- β in a nutritional composition is enhanced by the addition of a bioactive-enhanced whey fraction. Any bioactive whey fraction known in the art may be used in this embodiment provided it achieves the intended result. In an embodiment, this bioactive whey fraction may be a whey protein concentrate. In a particular embodiment, the whey protein concentrate may be Salibra[®] 800, available from Glanbia Nutritionals. In another embodiment, the whey protein concentrate may be Nutri Whey 800, available from DMV International. In yet another embodiment, the whey protein concentrate may be Salibra-850, available from Glanbia Nutritionals. In still another embodiment, the whey protein concentrate may be Prolacta Lacatalis WPI90, available from Lactilus Industries U.S.A., Inc. In a further embodiment, the whey protein concentrate may be supplied by MG Nutritionals.

[0041] In some embodiments, the composition of the invention induces oral tolerance. As used herein, the term "oral tolerance" refers to the specific suppression

of cellular and/or humoral immune responses to an antigen by prior administration of the antigen by the oral route. Oral tolerance affects the responsiveness of the local immune system in the intestinal mucosa itself, thus preventing hypersensitivity reactions to food proteins that could otherwise elicit potent inflammatory reactions in the gut. Development of oral tolerance is an important component in appropriate mucosal immune function. Oral antigens, like food, food proteins, or commensal bacteria, are normally processed in a manner that results in a regulated immune response. This response does not injure the host and results in systemic hypo-responsiveness in subsequent oral challenge with the same food antigen. Thus oral tolerance is established. Oral tolerance can fail, however, in response to the development and pathogenesis of several immunologically based diseases, including inflammatory bowel disease, Crohn's disease, and ulcerative colitis. In a particular embodiment, the combination of TGF- β and the prebiotics of the present invention may synergistically contribute to the induction of oral tolerance to antigens in circumstances where oral tolerance has previously failed. In some embodiments, the induction of oral tolerance may be enhanced by administration of the composition of the invention. In other embodiments, the oral tolerance acquired by a subject may be maintained by administration of the composition of the invention.

[0042] The following examples describe various embodiments of the present disclosure. Other embodiments within the scope of the claims herein will be apparent to one skilled in the art from consideration of the specification or practice of the invention as disclosed herein. It is intended that the specification, together with the examples, be considered to be exemplary only, with the scope and spirit of the invention being indicated by the claims which follow the examples. In the examples, all percentages are given on a weight basis unless otherwise indicated.

Example 1

[0043] This example illustrates another embodiment of a powdered infant formula of the present disclosure.

Ingredients

Ingredient	Amount per 100 kg
Lactose, Grind A	34.277 kg
Palm Olein Oil	12.267 kg

Ingredient	Amount per 100 kg
Coconut Oil	5.452 kg
Soy Oil	5.452 kg
High Oleic Sunflower Oil	4.089 kg
Non-Fat Dry Milk, Medium-Heat, Spray Dried	14.670 kg
Whey Protein Concentrate, 35% Protein, Super Sack	14.670 kg
Galacto-Oligosaccharide Syrup (77% solids, 44% fiber)	6.840 kg
Calcium Gluconate, Monohydrate	1.606 kg
Single Cell Arachidonic Acid Oil	0.347 kg
Single Cell Docosahexaenoic Acid Oil	0.238 kg
Choline Bitartrate	0.228 kg
Potassium Chloride	0.198 kg
Sodium Chloride	24.780 g
Magnesium Oxide, Light	22.794 g
L-Carnitine	9.911 g
Ascorbic Acid	146.436 g
Inositol	37.278 g
Corn Syrup Solids	33.159 g
Taurine	31.659 g
Dry vitamin E Tocopheryl Acetate, 50%	23.625 g
Vitamin A Palmitate, Dry Beadlets, CW Dispersible, 250	7.356 g
Niacinamide	6.051 g
Vitamin K1 Dry Phytonadione USP Powder, 1%	5.097 g
Calcium Pantothenate	3.084 g
Vitamin B ₁₂ , 0.1% in starch	1.983 g
Biotin Trituration, 1%	1.503 g
Vitamin D ₃ Powder	0.906 g
Riboflavin	0.705 g

Ingredient	Amount per 100 kg
Thiamine Hydrochloride	0.561 g
Pyridoxine Hydrochloride	0.483 g
Folic Acid	0.114 g
Corn Syrup Solids	192.187 g
Ferrous Sulfate, Heptahydrate	49.600 g
Ascorbic Acid	6.213 g
Malto-Dextrin	146.096 g
Cytidine 5'-Monophosphate, Free Acid	11.604 g
Uridine 5'-Monophosphate, Disodium Salt	3.419 g
Adenosine 5'-Monophosphate, Free Acid	2.711 g
Guanosine 5'-Monophosphate, Disodium Salt	2.170 g
Lactose, Grind A	138.017 g
Zinc Sulfate, Monohydrate	16.422 g
Corn Syrup Solids	3.616 g
Sodium Selenite, Anhydrous	0.018 g
Cupric Sulfate, Powder ($\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$)	1.688 g
Manganese Sulfate, Monohydrate	0.239 g

Proximate Analysis

	Grams per 100g	Grams per 100 mL at Normal Dilution	Caloric Distribution
Protein	10.84	1.47	8.34
Fat	28.57	3.89	49.50
Carbohydrate	54.87	7.46	42.16
Ash	2.70	0.37	
Moisture	3.02	89.9	
Calories	510	69.4	

Nutrients

Nutrient	Quantities per 100 Calories
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Nutrient	Quantities per 100 Calories
Calories	100
Protein, g	2.1
Fat, g	5.6
Carbohydrates, g	10.6
Ash, g	0.6
Water, mL (normal dilution)	133
Linoleic Acid, mg	900
α -Linolenic Acid, mg	85
Arachidonic Acid, mg	25
Docosaehaenoic Acid, mg	17
Vitamin A, IU	300
Vitamin D, IU	60
Vitamin E, IU	2
Vitamin K, mcg	8
Thiamin, mcg	80
Riboflavin, mcg	140
Vitamin B ₆ , mcg	60
Vitamin B ₁₂ , mcg	0.3
Niacin, mcg	1000
Folic Acid, mcg	16
Pantothenic Acid, mcg	500
Biotin, mcg	3
Vitamin C, mg	12
Choline, mg	24
Inositol, mg	6
Taurine, mg	6
Carnitine, mg	2
Calcium, mg	78
Phosphorus, mg	43
Magnesium, mg	8
Iron, mg	1.8

Nutrient	Quantities per 100 Calories
Zinc, mg	1
Manganese, mcg	15
Copper, mcg	75
Iodine, mcg	10
Sodium, mg	27
Potassium, mg	108
Chloride, mg	63
Selenium, mcg	2.8
Galacto-oligosaccharide	0.6
AMP Equivalents, mg	0.5
CMP Equivalents, mg	2.5
GMP Equivalents, mg	0.3
UMP Equivalents, mg	0.9
Nucleotide Equivalents, mg	4.2

[0044] To prepare 1 liter of product at standard dilution (20 kcal/fl. oz.), 136 grams of powder was mixed with 895.2 grams of water. To prepare 1 quart of product at standard dilution, 128.7 grams of powder was mixed with 847.2 grams water.

[0045] Upon reconstitution, the infant formula described in this example contains approximately 4 g/L of galacto-oligosaccharide and has an ARA level of 25 mg/100 kcal. The formula contains 5.6 g fat/100 kcal, to achieve a fat content which is similar to human milk. The formula additionally has a low buffer strength.

[0046] All pH adjustments with regard to this infant formula were made with solutions of potassium hydroxide. The specific gravity of the formula is 1.03117.

Example 2

[0047] This example illustrates an embodiment of a powdered infant formula of the present disclosure.

Ingredients

Ingredient	Amount per 100 kg
Lactose, Grind A	35.119 kg
Palm Olein Oil	12.264 kg

Ingredient	Amount per 100 kg
Coconut Oil	5.451 kg
Soy Oil	5.451 kg
High Oleic Sunflower Oil	4.088 kg
Non-Fat Dry Milk, Medium-Heat, Spray Dried	14.667 kg
Whey Protein Concentrate, 35% Protein, Super Sack	14.667 kg
Galacto-Oligosaccharide Syrup (77% solids, 44% fiber)	3.477 kg
Polydextrose Power (96% total solids, 96% carbohydrate, 86% fiber)	1.770 kg
Calcium Gluconate, Monohydrate	1.606 kg
Single Cell Arachidonic Acid Oil	0.347 kg
Single Cell Docosaheaxaenoic Acid Oil	0.238 kg
Choline Bitartrate	0.228 kg
Potassium Chloride	0.198 kg
Sodium Chloride	24.780 g
Magnesium Oxide, Light	22.790 g
L-Carnitine	9.910 g
Ascorbic Acid	156.687 g
Inositol	39.887 g
Corn Syrup Solids	35.478 g
Taurine	33.875 g
Dry vitamin E Tocopheryl Acetate, 50%	25.279 g
Vitamin A Palmitate, Dry Beadlets, CW Dispersible, 250	7.871 g
Niacinamide	6.475 g
Vitamin K1 Dry Phytonadione USP Powder, 1%	5.454 g
Calcium Pantothenate	3.299 g
Vitamin B ₁₂ , 0.1% in starch	2.122 g
Biotin Trituration, 1%	1.608 g

Ingredient	Amount per 100 kg
Vitamin D ₃ Powder	0.969 g
Riboflavin	0.755 g
Thiamine Hydrochloride	0.601 g
Pyridoxine Hydrochloride	0.518 g
Folic Acid	0.122 g
Corn Syrup Solids	192.187 g
Ferrous Sulfate, Heptahydrate	49.600 g
Ascorbic Acid	6.213 g
Malto-Dextrin	146.096 g
Cytidine 5'-Monophosphate, Free Acid	11.604 g
Uridine 5'-Monophosphate, Disodium Salt	3.419 g
Adenosine 5'-Monophosphate, Free Acid	2.711 g
Guanosine 5'-Monophosphate, Disodium Salt	2.170 g
Lactose, Grind A	138.017 g
Zinc Sulfate, Monohydrate	16.422 g
Corn Syrup Solids	3.616 g
Sodium Selenite, Anhydrous	0.018 g
Cupric Sulfate, Powder (CuSO ₄ · 5H ₂ O)	1.688 g
Manganese Sulfate, Monohydrate	0.239 g

Proximate Analysis

	Grams per 100g	Grams per 100 mL at Normal Dilution	Caloric Distribution
Protein	10.84	1.47	8.50
Fat	28.57	3.89	50.67
Carbohydrate	54.87	7.46	40.83
Ash	2.70	0.37	
Moisture	3.02	89.9	
Calories	508	69.1	

Nutrients

Nutrient	Quantities per 100 Calories
Calories	100
Protein, g	2.1
Fat, g	5.6
Carbohydrates, g	10.6
Ash, g	0.6
Water, mL (normal dilution)	133
Linoleic Acid, mg	900
α -Linolenic Acid, mg	85
Arachidonic Acid, mg	25
Docosahexaenoic Acid, mg	17
Vitamin A, IU	300
Vitamin D, IU	60
Vitamin E, IU	2
Vitamin K, mcg	8
Thiamin, mcg	80
Riboflavin, mcg	140
Vitamin B ₆ , mcg	60
Vitamin B ₁₂ , mcg	0.3
Niacin, mcg	1000
Folic Acid, mcg	16
Pantothenic Acid, mcg	500
Biotin, mcg	3
Vitamin C, mg	12
Choline, mg	24
Inositol, mg	6
Taurine, mg	6
Carnitine, mg	2
Calcium, mg	78
Phosphorus, mg	43
Magnesium, mg	8

Nutrient	Quantities per 100 Calories
Iron, mg	1.8
Zinc, mg	1
Manganese, mcg	15
Copper, mcg	75
Iodine, mcg	10
Sodium, mg	27
Potassium, mg	108
Chloride, mg	63
Selenium, mcg	2.8
Polydextrose	0.3
Galacto-oligosaccharide	0.3
AMP Equivalents, mg	0.5
CMP Equivalents, mg	2.5
GMP Equivalents, mg	0.3
UMP Equivalents, mg	0.9
Nucleotide Equivalents, mg	4.2

[0048] To prepare 1 liter of product at standard dilution (20 kcal/fl. oz.), 136 grams of powder was mixed with 895.2 grams of water. To prepare 1 quart of product at standard dilution, 128.7 grams of powder was mixed with 847.2 grams water.

[0049] Upon reconstitution, the infant formula described in this example contains approximately 2 g/L of galacto-oligosaccharide and 2 g/L of polydextrose. The infant formula has an ARA level of 25 mg/100 kcal. The formula contains 5.6 g fat/100 kcal, to achieve a fat content which is similar to human milk. The formula additionally has a low buffer strength.

[0050] All pH adjustments with regard to this infant formula were made with solutions of potassium hydroxide. The specific gravity of the formula is 1.03117.

Example 3

[0051] This example illustrates a comparison of calcium carbonate and calcium gluconate in infant formula diets meeting calcium requirements of neonatal pigs both with and without oligosaccharide supplementation. In this study, the feeding of

calcium carbonate is compared to the feeding of calcium gluconate in diets with and without oligosaccharide supplementation.

[0052] Twenty-eight neonatal pigs from aged from 1 to 15 days are used in the example. The formula is provided in equal amounts to the pigs 3 times daily via a gravity-fed nipple feeding system at a rate designed to allow growth similar to that of sow-raised piglets. Diets are formulated to be nutritionally equivalent and to contain 1.3% calcium, which is intended to slightly exceed the nutritional requirements of the pigs.

[0053] A significant effect of calcium source ($P < 0.01$) on growth performance is seen. Pigs receiving formulas containing calcium carbonate have higher rates of body weight gain, feed intake, and efficiency of body weight gain than those receiving calcium gluconate. Thus, calcium gluconate may have a weight-management effect by modulating body weight gain and feed intake.

[0054] While initially there were no significant differences in plasma calcium or phosphorous concentrations among any of the treatment groups, at day 5 and day 10 of feeding, pigs fed the calcium gluconate formulas have higher ($P < 0.01$) plasma calcium concentrations and lower ($P < 0.01$) plasma inorganic phosphorous concentrations. However, by the end of the study, there is no longer a significant difference in plasma calcium concentrations based on dietary calcium source but plasma inorganic phosphorous is still significantly lower ($P < 0.01$) in pigs fed the calcium gluconate-containing formulas.

[0055] At the completion of the study there are no significant effects of calcium source on the length, fresh weight, dry weight, or ash weight of the radial and ulna bones of the pigs. The maximum load tolerated by these bones during 3-point flexural testing is, however, significantly greater ($P < 0.05$) in calcium gluconate-fed pigs. Additionally, there is a trend for higher bone ash % ($P < 0.06$) in the calcium gluconate-fed pigs.

[0056] All references cited in this specification, including without limitation, all papers, publications, patents, patent applications, presentations, texts, reports, manuscripts, brochures, books, internet postings, journal articles, periodicals, and the like, are hereby incorporated by reference into this specification in their entireties. The discussion of the references herein is intended merely to summarize the assertions made by their authors and no admission is made that any reference

constitutes prior art. Applicants reserve the right to challenge the accuracy and pertinence of the cited references.

[0057] Although preferred embodiments of the invention have been described using specific terms, devices, and methods, such description is for illustrative purposes only. The words used are words of description rather than of limitation. It is to be understood that changes and variations may be made by those of ordinary skill in the art without departing from the spirit or the scope of the present invention, which is set forth in the following claims. In addition, it should be understood that aspects of the various embodiments may be interchanged both in whole or in part. For example, while methods for the production of a commercially sterile liquid nutritional supplement made according to those methods have been exemplified, other uses are contemplated. Therefore, the spirit and scope of the appended claims should not be limited to the description of the preferred versions contained therein.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A nutritional composition comprising
 - a. a lipid or fat;
 - b. a protein source;
 - c. a source of long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids which comprises docosahexanoic acid; and
 - d. up to about 2.5% by weight of a source of supplemental calcium which, when dissociated, provides a carbohydrate moiety having prebiotic functionality.
2. The nutritional composition of claim 1, wherein the source of long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids further comprises arachidonic acid.
3. The nutritional composition of claim 2, wherein the ratio of arachidonic acid to docosahexanoic acid is from about 1:3 to about 9:1.
4. The nutritional composition of claim 1, wherein the lipid or fat is present at a level of up to about 7 g/100 kcal.
5. The nutritional composition of claim 1, wherein the protein source is present at a level of up to about 5 g/100 kcal.
6. The nutritional composition of claim 1, wherein at least 20% of the source of supplemental calcium comprises calcium gluconate.
7. The nutritional composition of claim 1, which further comprises about 0.2 to about 1.5 mg/100 kcal of a prebiotic composition, wherein the prebiotic composition comprises at least 20% of an oligosaccharide which comprises galacto-oligosaccharide.
8. The nutritional composition of claim 7, wherein the prebiotic composition further comprises polydextrose.
9. The nutritional composition of claim 1, which further comprises at least one probiotic.
10. The nutritional composition of claim 9, wherein the probiotic is selected from the group consisting of *Bifidobacteria* spp., *Lactobacillus* spp and combinations thereof.
11. The nutritional composition of claim 1, which further comprises about 0.015 to about 0.1 (pg/ μ g) ppm of TGF- β .
12. The nutritional composition of claim 11, wherein the level of TGF- β is from about 2500 pg/mL to about 10,000 pg/mL composition.

13. The nutritional composition of claim 11, wherein the ratio of TGF- β 1: TGF- β 2 is about 1:1 to about 1:20.