

Global Lactulose Syrup Market to Surpass USD 260.7 Million by 2032 Amid Rising Demand for Gut Health Solutions in Japan

Tokyo, Japan – May 9, 2025 | Source: Dataintelo Consulting Pvt. Ltd - According to Dataintelo, the **global Lactulose Syrup Market** was valued at **USD 182.9 million in 2024** and is projected to reach **USD 260.7 million by 2032**, registering a **compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.5%** over the forecast period. Notably, **Japan is forecasted to contribute approximately 13.2% of the global market share by 2027**, supported by its aging population, increased gastrointestinal disorder cases, and a shift toward non-stimulant laxatives in healthcare practices.

Lactulose syrup, widely recognized for its osmotic laxative and ammonia-reducing capabilities, is witnessing heightened adoption in Japan's healthcare system—particularly in treating hepatic encephalopathy and chronic constipation among elderly and pediatric patients. With **over 29% of the Japanese population aged 65 and above**, the country is becoming a strategic market for manufacturers focusing on gastrointestinal therapeutics.

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Market Overview and Future Outlook

In 2024, **pharmaceutical-grade lactulose syrup dominated the global market with a 58.3% revenue share**, followed by food-grade applications at 29.4% and veterinary-grade at 12.3%. In Japan, pharmaceutical applications accounted for over 64% of total lactulose consumption, supported by the Ministry of Health's national prescription reform favoring safe and effective laxatives.

Urban health centers across **Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya** reported a **17.5% increase in lactulose syrup prescriptions** year-on-year in 2023. The demand is being driven not only by traditional hospitals but also by digitally integrated clinics and online pharmacy platforms offering subscription-based gut health solutions.

In regional terms, **Asia Pacific held 34.6% of global lactulose syrup revenue** in 2024. Japan alone is projected to expand its share to **nearly 7% by 2028**, as public and private insurers expand coverage for preventive gut health treatments.

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Segmentation Analysis

By Region:

Japan recorded a **10.8% year-over-year increase in lactulose syrup imports in 2023**, particularly in bulk syrup form. The ports of **Yokohama and Osaka** saw the highest import volumes, supporting robust distribution to metropolitan hospitals and pharmaceutical wholesalers.

By Grade:

- **Pharmaceutical-Grade:** 58.3% of global market in 2024
- **Food-Grade:** 29.4%
- **Veterinary-Grade:** 12.3%

Japan's healthcare regulatory authority approved **11 new lactulose-based formulations in 2023**, focusing on taste masking and pediatric-specific dosage.

By End User:

- **Geriatric Segment:** 41.7% global market share
- **Pediatric Segment:** 28.6%
- **Fitness & Wellness Users:** 12.9%
- **Post-Surgical & Hepatic Patients:** 16.8%

Recent trends indicate **a 14.2% annual increase in prescriptions for hepatic patients** in Japan, reflecting a growing reliance on lactulose as part of liver function management protocols.

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Market Drivers, Restraints, and Opportunities

The broader gastrointestinal therapeutics industry exceeded **USD 180 billion globally in 2023**, creating fertile ground for safe laxatives like lactulose syrup. In Japan, the **digitization of prescription management and the expansion of elder care facilities** have directly boosted demand.

However, the market faces challenges due to **supply chain bottlenecks**, particularly in acquiring high-purity lactose (a raw material for lactulose production) from European markets. Import reliance and stringent customs testing have increased lead times for Japanese buyers by an average of 12 days in 2024.

Despite these challenges, Japan is expected to generate **USD 24.5 million in new lactulose-related revenue by 2030**, thanks to emerging opportunities in **telehealth-driven prescriptions, AI-based gut health diagnostics**, and national emphasis on preventive elderly care.

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Competitive Landscape

The competitive landscape is evolving with a **12.3% rise in pharmaceutical distribution mergers** globally in 2024. Japan's top three pharmaceutical importers have expanded their cold-chain and ambient storage facilities by 18% to accommodate more syrup-based imports.

According to Dataintelo, nearly **72% of lactulose syrup imports into Japan underwent multi-phase quality testing in 2023**, ensuring compliance with the nation's strict pharmacopoeia standards. Research efforts are also focused on **developing non-synthetic, vegan-friendly lactulose variants**, which could appeal to Japan's growing functional food segment.

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Recent Developments

In alignment with the **"Healthy Aging 2030" national agenda**, the Japanese government introduced **three new insurance reimbursement codes in 2023** for non-stimulant laxative products, benefitting over 60% of lactulose syrup vendors operating in the country.

Meanwhile, Tokyo-based biotech firms secured **USD 18 million in funding** to research dual-action lactulose formulas that combine prebiotics and probiotics for enhanced gut flora modulation.

Additionally, the **Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare** launched a national database in 2024 tracking adverse reactions to common laxatives. Preliminary results show **lactulose syrup having the lowest side-effect index (0.8%) among the top five prescribed solutions**, reinforcing its position in chronic care protocols.

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