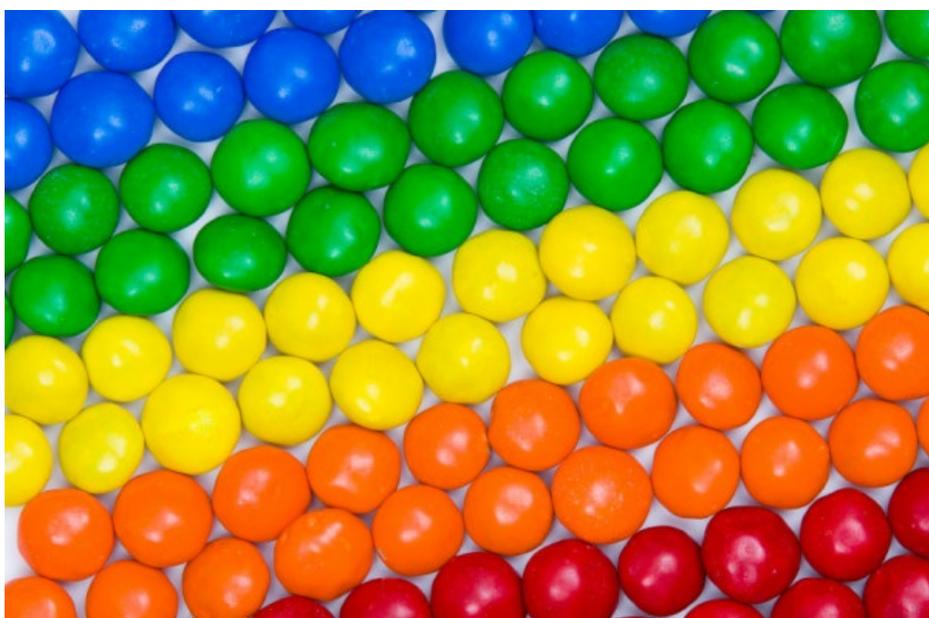


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## Don't taste the rainbow: Why companies are ditching artificial colors



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Your favorite sweet treat may be getting a makeover. This month, candy giant Mars, Inc. announced it will remove all artificial colors from its human food products over the next five years.

The company – which produces Skittles, M&Ms and other brightly colored confections – isn't making the change because it believes artificial food dyes are harmful, however. Instead, Mars says it's getting rid of artificial colors to keep up with consumer preferences.

"Artificial colors pose no known risks to human health or safety, but consumers today are calling on food manufacturers to use more natural ingredients in their products," said Mars in a [news release](#).

"Against this backdrop, Mars will work closely with its suppliers to find alternatives that not only meet its strict quality and safety standards, but also maintain the vibrant, fun colors consumers have come to expect from the company's beloved brands."

The change is the latest in a growing number of companies vowing to get rid of artificial colors. [Kraft](#), [General Mills](#) and [Nestlé](#) are among manufacturers also nixing dyes from their products.

### Are food dyes dangerous?

While the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) maintains [artificial colors are safe](#), experts have linked dyes to the sharp rise in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), [reports Civil Eats](#). And more evidence of their harmful effects has mounted since 2011, when the FDA last reviewed the issue.

The 2016 report "[Seeing Red](#)," written by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), estimates that more than half a million

children in the United States suffer adverse behavioral reactions after eating or drinking food dyes, which leads to upwards of \$5 billion per year in health costs.

CSPI is critical of both the FDA's inaction and companies that sell dye-free versions of their products overseas but continue to sell products made with dyes in the United States, [reports Consumer Affairs](#).

"Major food companies like Coca-Cola, General Mills, McDonald's, and PepsiCo should be embarrassed that they're selling their American customers foods colored with Yellow 5, Yellow 6, Red 40, and other synthetic dyes, even as they're selling naturally colored or dye-free versions of the same foods in Europe," said [CSPI president Michael Jacobson](#).

"American children will continue to be exposed to these powerful chemicals so long as FDA lags behind its European counterparts," he added.

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