

# **RFK Jr. Unveils Plan to Phase Out Artificial Food Dyes**

*Trump administration aims to eliminate petroleum-based dyes in food by the end of 2026; food companies have vouched for dyes' safety*

**By Jesse Newman**  
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The Trump administration is moving to strip artificial food dyes from the American diet.

The Health and Human Services Department and Food and Drug Administration unveiled measures Tuesday to eliminate [petroleum-based synthetic dyes in food](#), including Red 40, Yellow 5 and 6, Green 3, and Blue 1 and 2.

The FDA said it would work with the food industry to remove those dyes from the food supply by the end of next year. The agency said it is authorizing four new natural color additives in the coming weeks, as well as speeding the review and approval of others.

Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said the agency has “an understanding” with the food industry regarding the removal of food dyes. FDA Commissioner Marty Makary said it has numerous regulatory tools to achieve its aim.

“Kids have been living in a toxic soup of synthetic chemicals,” Makary said at a press conference. “For companies using red dye, try watermelon juice, or beet juice. For companies combining yellow and red dyes together, try carrot juice.”

Kennedy supporters, some in “Make America Healthy Again” ball caps, cheered the announcements made in the headquarters of the Health and Human Services Department in Washington, D.C.

The plan to phase out the dyes is one of Kennedy’s first efforts to overhaul the nation’s food supply, a sweeping crusade that has animated his MAHA agenda and [its ardent supporters](#). Kennedy [has blamed artificial dyes](#) and other food additives for a litany of health problems, and said that they are poisoning American children.

Big food companies and industry groups have pushed back, saying the artificial dyes they use have been deemed safe.

“FDA and regulatory bodies around the world have deemed our products and ingredients safe, and we look forward to working with the Trump Administration and Congress on this issue,” said Christopher Gindlesperger, senior vice president for public

affairs and communications for the National Confectioners Association, a trade group representing chocolate and candy companies.

Still, some food companies have already begun reformulating products from candy to plant-based meat alternatives. Dairy companies have pledged to cut seven artificial dyes from milk, cheese and yogurt supplied for national school breakfast and lunch programs by July 2026, according to the International Dairy Foods Association.

Cereal giant [WK Kellogg](#) said Tuesday it plans to work with HHS and the FDA to find ways to remove artificial dyes from all of its products. While the Froot Loops maker said 85% of its cereal sales already come from products without artificial dyes, Kellogg won't launch new products with artificial colors beginning in January 2026.

The U.S. crackdown on dyes began in January, when the [FDA banned the use of Red No. 3](#) in food and ingested drugs. In March, Kennedy told [executives from the nation's biggest food companies](#) that he wanted other dyes out of the food supply before he leaves office.

Lawmakers across the country [have also taken up the cause](#), introducing legislation to restrict artificial dyes in supermarkets or schools, or require warning labels.

Artificial dyes are ubiquitous in American supermarkets, giving foods such as [Trix cereal](#) and Nerds candies their vivid colors, and helping boost the appearance of everything from salad dressing to marshmallows.

A Wall Street Journal analysis of a federal database detailing food and beverage ingredients found that more than 1 in 10 products contain at least one artificial dye. More than 40% of items incorporating dyes use three or more, including popular pantry items such as some Pop-Tarts and Doritos.

Shifting the U.S. food supply chain from synthetic to natural colors will take several years, said Paul Manning, chief executive of [Sensient Technologies](#), one of the world's largest producers of food colors. The raw materials that make up natural dyes are grown all over the world, and it will take time to sustainably increase production of crops such as turmeric, black carrots and purple sweet potatoes, Manning said.

"The single biggest bottleneck is going to be the supply chain," Manning said.

The FDA in previous administrations has said that the dyes it approved are safe when used in accordance with agency regulations. The agency said scientific evidence shows that most children experience no adverse effects from eating foods with the added colors, though some evidence suggested certain children might be sensitive to them.

Lawmakers and others concerned about artificial dyes point to a 2021 report by California's state's office of environmental health hazard assessment that found consuming synthetic dyes can lead to hyperactivity and other neurobehavioral problems in some children.

The FDA said Tuesday that it would join with the National Institutes of Health to conduct further research on how food additives affect the health and development of children.