

Nestle USA strips artificial bits from chocolate candy

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No more artificial flavors and colors in Butterfinger, Babe Ruth or any Nestle chocolate candies in the United States, because Americans want them gone, the Swiss food giant said Tuesday.

Nestle USA pledged to remove artificial flavors and government-certified [colors](#) from all its more than 250 [products](#) by the end of the year.

"We're excited to be the first major US candy manufacturer to make this [commitment](#)," said Doreen Ida, [president](#) of Nestle USA Confections & Snacks.

The unit of the world's leading food company said its customer research on brands like Butterfinger showed US consumers prefer candy that is free of artificial flavors and colors.

The company also cited Nielsen's 2014 Global Health & Wellness Survey, which found more than an 60 percent of Americans said the absence of artificial colors or flavors was important to their food purchase decisions.

Nestle USA said it would replace the artificial flavors, and colors certified as safe by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), with ingredients from natural sources.

For example, annato from the seed of the fruit from the achiote tree will

replace Red 40 and Yellow 5 in Butterfinger's crunchy center. Natural vanilla flavor will replace artificial vanillin in Crunch.

"We know that candy consumers are interested in broader food trends around fewer artificial ingredients. As we thought about what this means for our candy brands, our first step has been to remove artificial flavors and colors without affecting taste or increasing the price."

The revamped products will begin appearing on store shelves by mid-2015, labeled "No Artificial Flavors or Colors", the company said.

And all newly launched chocolate and non-chocolate candy products marketed by Nestle USA will be made without artificial flavors or colors, it pledged.

The company also said it is working on removing caramel coloring, used in nine of its chocolate products.

Caramel coloring, a common food coloring, is under scrutiny by consumer activists who say it may cause cancer.

According to the FDA website, the agency is reviewing data on a chemical compound in caramel coloring to make sure that its use in [food](#) remained safe.

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