

Social media pressuring changes in food industry

By Stephanie Strom, New York Times

Renee Shutters has long worried that food dyes – used in candy like blue M&M's – were hurting her son, Trenton.

She testified before the Food and Drug Administration, but nothing happened. It wasn't until she went online, using a petition with the help of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, that her pleas to remove artificial dyes from food seemed to be heard.

Mars, the candy's maker, is now hinting that it may soon replace at least one of the dyes with an alternative derived from seaweed.

While the FDA continues to allow certain dyes to be used in foods, deeming them safe, parents and advocacy groups have been using websites and social media as powerful megaphones to force titans of the food industry to reconsider the ingredients in their foods and the labeling and processing of their products. In several instances in the last year or so, major food companies and fast-food chains have shifted to coloring derived from spices or other plant-based sources, or changed or omitted certain labels from packaging.

Read the whole story