



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 6, 2013**

**CONTACT:** Glenn Turner, 917-817-3396, [glenn@ripplestrategies.com](mailto:glenn@ripplestrategies.com)  
Shayna Samuels, 718-541-4785, [shayna@ripplestrategies.com](mailto:shayna@ripplestrategies.com)

## **Dunkin' Donuts Products Contain Titanium Dioxide Nanoparticles, New Report Says**

**Presence of Untested Nanoparticles in Food Raises Public Health Concerns**

**Group Launches [Crowdfunding Campaign](#) to Test M&M's, Pop-Tarts, Trident Gum, & More**

*[Slipping Through the Cracks: An Issue Brief on Nanomaterials in Food](#)* was released today by [As You Sow](#), a nonprofit organization that promotes corporate responsibility and environmental health. The brief includes results of a survey of 2,500 food companies about their use of nanomaterials in food products, as well as laboratory results showing titanium dioxide (TiO<sub>2</sub>) nanoparticles in the white powdered sugar that coats Dunkin' Donuts Powdered Cake Donuts and Hostess Donettes.

Intent on testing more common food products, As You Sow has simultaneously launched a crowdfunding campaign on Indiegogo ([www.indiegogo.com/nanoays](http://www.indiegogo.com/nanoays)). "We plan to raise enough money to test M&M's, Pop-Tarts, and Trident gum for nanomaterials," said As You Sow CEO Andrew Behar. "This unregulated new technology is clearly entering our food supply. There has been little, if any, safety testing and there is no transparency on what products contain them. As we learned from our survey, many companies may not even know that they have nanomaterials in their supply chain."

Nanomaterials have been heralded as having the potential to revolutionize the food industry – from enabling production of creamy liquids that contain no fat, to enhancing flavors, improving supplement delivery, providing brighter colors, keeping food fresh longer, or indicating when it spoils. Yet few, if any, studies adequately demonstrate the safety of nanoparticles in food. In fact, scientists are still investigating how nanoparticles will react in the body and what testing methodologies are appropriate to determine this.

"There has been a lot of buzz about the potential for nanomaterials in food, but very little information about the risks to public health," said Danielle Fugere, As You Sow President and co-author of the brief. "Much deeper scientific inquiry is needed to prove nanomaterials are safe before they continue to be sold commercially."

Currently, the U.S. has no labeling requirement for food products or food packaging containing nanomaterials. The Food and Drug Administration has stated that nanomaterials cannot be generally regarded as safe, but has not taken sufficient steps to determine toxicity exposure or to move towards regulating them, despite the likelihood that nanomaterials are rapidly making their way into our food supply.

Because of their small size, nanoparticles can go places in the body that larger particles cannot. Nanoparticles in food or food packaging can gain access via ingestion, inhalation, or skin penetration. Once inside our bodies, nanoparticles can penetrate cell walls and pass into the blood and lymph system. From there, the particles can circulate through the body and reach potentially sensitive target sites such as the bone marrow, lymph nodes, spleen, liver, and heart, and may also cross the blood-brain barrier.

As You Sow's survey results indicate that food, food packaging, and supplement companies are not being transparent about their use of nanomaterials. The survey was sent to 2,500 companies in the food industry, including the 100 largest food processing companies, the 50 largest food distributors, the 75 largest food retailers, the 25 top packaging companies, the 50 top fast food companies, and 187 supplement companies. It yielded only 26 responses and a third of those companies admitted they did not know if nanomaterials are present in their products or supply chains. Only two companies had formal policies on the use of this new food additive that has undergone little or no safety testing.

"Companies need to address the issue of nano-engineered materials in a proactive and transparent way," says Fugere. "Failure to understand whether nanomaterials are being used in a food product, or to understand the potential harm to human health and the environment from those materials, poses significant risks to investors in those companies."

"Companies should survey their suppliers to learn if there are nanomaterials in their food products or packaging, and should disclose their policies on nanomaterials," says Michael Passoff, co-author of the brief. "Consumers and stakeholders should question companies about their use of nanomaterials and press for labeling of nano-enhanced products. Given the recent consumer outrage over GMOs and BPA, companies need to act now to prevent a similar backlash that could have a negative impact on the company's reputation and financial performance."

The issue brief is a follow-up to As You Sow's 2011 [\*Sourcing Framework for Food and Food Packaging Products Containing Nanomaterials\*](#), which presents steps companies should take, including questions they should ask their suppliers, regarding the safety of products containing nanomaterials to allow them to make informed decisions on this issue.

# # #

As You Sow is a nonprofit organization that promotes environmental and social corporate responsibility through shareholder advocacy, coalition building, and innovative legal strategies. For more information visit [www.asyousow.org](http://www.asyousow.org).