

## Dunkin' Donuts Says It Will Remove Controversial Whitening Agent From Powdered Sugar

Mary Beth Quirk | Mar. 05, 2015



Dunkin' Donuts announced today that it's planning to remove titanium dioxide, a whitening agent often used in toothpaste and sunscreen as well as other products, from all powdered sugar used on its doughnuts.

The move comes after pressure from an advocacy group that voiced concerns about nanoparticles, which are teeny tiny particles that can have different physical properties than their larger, macro counterparts.

The Food and Drug Administration says it "does not categorically judge all products containing nanomaterials or otherwise involving the application of nanotechnology as intrinsically benign or harmful."

But critics have said not enough is known about the potential for health issues that could result from ingesting nanomaterials: A nonprofit group called **As You Sow** lobbies companies on environmental and social-responsibility issues, and had pressured Dunkin' to remove titanium dioxide from its powdered sugar, dubbing the additive a nanoparticle.

While Dunkin' has agreed to pull the ingredient, it disagrees with the group's characterization of titanium dioxide as a nanoparticle.

"The ingredient used in our powdered donuts does not meet the definition of 'nanoparticle' as outlined under FDA guidance," a Dunkin' Brands spokeswoman said in a statement via CNBC. "Nevertheless, we began testing alternative formulations for this product in 2014 and we are in the process of rolling out a solution to the system that does not contain titanium dioxide."

**As You Sow** says it will now withdraw a shareholder proposal that urged Dunkin' to assess its use of nanomaterials on concerns that the particles are toxic when ingested.