

Hershey kisses science goodbye

By ACSH Staff — February 27, 2015



It is fairly standard practice for companies to try to give their

customers what they want, even if it makes no sense. Perhaps the most [notable recent example](#) [1] was Johnson and Johnson, which bowed to pressure from consumers (aka environmentalist and consumer activist groups that supposedly represent consumers) to remove quaternium-15 from their No More Tears baby shampoo.

Quaternium-15 is a preservative which acts by slowly decomposing and giving off minute amounts of formaldehyde the active preservative. Johnson and Johnson had been under fire for years from the always (or is it never?) accurate Environmental Working Group to change a formula that had been used since 1953

Why? This is answered by Heather White, the executive director of EWG: We don't know the answer to that. But why is there a carcinogen in their shampoo? When in doubt, take it out. Brilliant.

White, whose degree from the University of Tennessee College of Law undoubtedly prepared her to deal with complex toxicology issues, latched on to the OJ defense mantra science by rhyming. The result: J&J, rather than risk being labeled as baby killers, caved.

In today's *Irony News*, J&J's new formula now contains *three* preservatives. One of them, sodium benzoate, is [described on EWG's own website](#) [2] as being responsible for ADHD and cancer in children. The other two, [ethylhexylglycerine](#) [3] and [phenoxyethanol](#) [4] are both described by the group: HIGH concerns: Irritation (skin, eyes, or lungs), Occupational hazards; Other MODERATE concerns: Organ system toxicity (non-reproductive).

So, other than maybe EWG's bank account, it is reasonable to ask whether there were any health benefits from this change. You decide.

Hershey is now pandering to the anti-you-name-it crowd. They are going all natural!

ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom points out a few fallacies in their new marketing approach: First, they are now doing away with the ghastly man-made chemical vanillin, which is used to give vanilla its flavor and replacing it with vanilla extract. I wonder if they realize that the principal chemical that

gives vanilla extract its flavor is 1 vanillin. Damn, that's progress if I've ever seen it.

Another meaningless claim is the GMO-free nonsense. Among other things, this means that they will not be using sugar that is derived from GM sugar beets. But, as we have repeatedly [noted](#) [5], the sugar (*sucrose*) from GM-sugar beets is completely indistinguishable from the sugar (*sucrose!*) derived from any other source, such as non-GM sugar beets, or sugar cane. Strike two.

Finally, regarding the natural is good fallacy, consider a [huge story](#) [6], also from this week. Thousands of dogs were killed by consuming food contaminated by mycotoxins a class of highly toxic, carcinogenic chemicals which are produced by mold. These are natural.

Dr. Bloom says, The Whole Foods marketing model nothing artificial, no preservatives, no chemicals, etc. has certainly caught on. Too bad it's a bunch of nonsense. Except when it comes to suckering people into paying twice as much for the same thing that just happens to have a green label on it.

The real reason, as you may have guessed by now, for the move by Hershey is clear as organic water. From [The Guardian](#) [7], Hershey's rival Nestle has recently announced they would remove artificial ingredients from their products.

Yep Hershey is going green. The same color as money.

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Links

[1] <http://acsh.org/2013/09/same-old-procter-gamble-bans-two-ingredients-but-not-based-on-science/>

[2] <http://www.ewg.org/enviroblog/2007/09/how-cutting-out-certain-food-additives-could-curb-adhd-and-cancer-too>

[3] <http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/ingredient/702352/ETHYLHEXYLGLYCERIN/>

[4] <http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/ingredient/704811/PHENOXYETHANOL/>

[5] <http://acsh.org/2014/08/pro-gmo-movement-continues-gain-support-anti-gmo-movement-spirals-downward/>

[6] <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/lawsuit-claims-purinas-beneful-poisoning-killing-dogs-n312176>

[7] <http://guardianlv.com/2015/02/hershey-goes-gmo-free/>