

How Long Will I Be Blue?

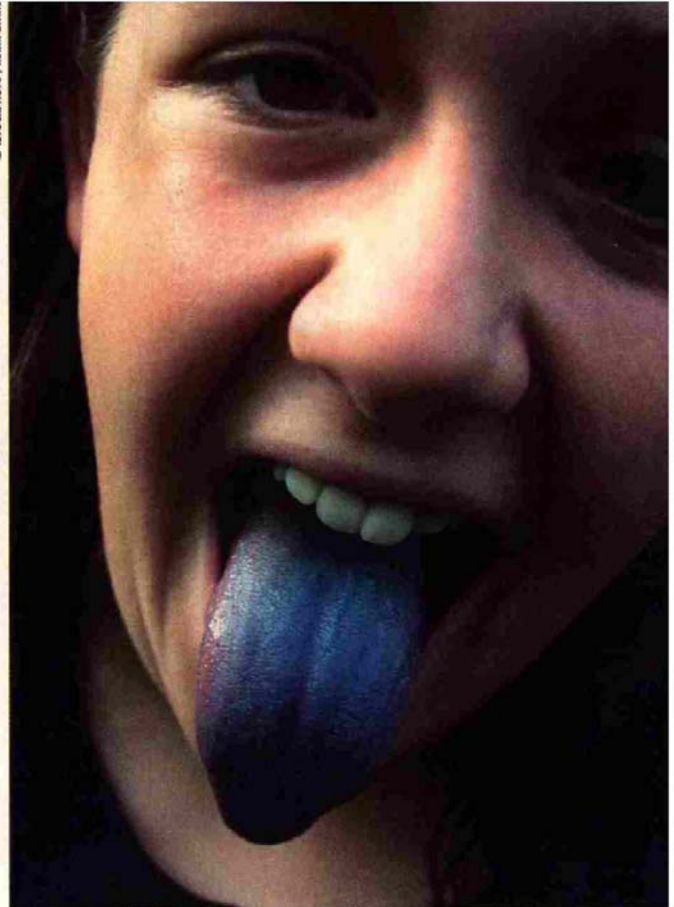
The success of many products depends on coloring additives. Keeping products “looking like new” remains a formulation challenge. Industry insiders weigh in with opinions and advice.

Claudia D. O'Donnell, Chief Editor

A food's appearance may well be its most important characteristic. After all, a product's taste or nutritional benefits will be of little value, if a consumer does not want to even taste the product.

Colorings may be added for functional reasons—to help protect nutrients, for example. However, they primarily are used to improve a product's attractiveness and to communicate certain product characteristics to consumers. For instance, through its use of Yellow 5 Lake and Blue 1 Lake colors, Kraft Foods' Nabisco Oreo Cool Mint Double Stuf cookies signal to customers that they definitely have a cool mint flavor. CandyRific's Lite-Up Cool Pops Flower Power candy attracts kids with turmeric root extract and anthocyanin colorings. (A package that is a battery-powered fan helps as well). Similarly, lycopene helps color Kalona Organics Strawberry yogurt, while Red 40 gives Lucerne Foods' Watermelon Flavored applesauce an eye-catching red.

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One color in the hand, another in the mouth. By combining lakes and dyes, a product can be made to change color, once placed in the mouth.