



## Citizen Petition Calls on FDA to Rethink Refined Carbs

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By: Nathan A. Brown, Oluwaremilekun O. Mehner

Last week, former Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner David Kessler submitted a citizen petition urging FDA to revoke the generally recognized as safe (GRAS) status of refined carbohydrates used in industrial food processing. The petition follows FDA's and the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) joint request for information (RFI) to establish a formal definition for ultra-processed foods (UPFs) and offers FDA a legal pathway to change the regulatory status of these ingredients.

Specifically, the petition focuses on refined sweeteners and refined flour and starches, including corn syrup, corn solids, glucose syrups, wheat and corn flour—highlighting these ingredients as key markers of UPFs. The petitioner argues that processed refined carbohydrates can no longer be considered GRAS in light of scientific evidence linking their consumption to metabolic harm leading to obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. If granted as proposed, manufacturers would be required to submit food additive petitions to demonstrate the safety of these ingredients for continued use.

The petition marks a potential turning point in FDA's approach to food regulation. While Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has so far relied on voluntary industry action to remove synthetic dyes and other additives from consumer products, this petition calls for a more assertive regulatory stance. It also aligns with growing public and institutional appetite to address the health impacts of UPFs and other food additives, as reflected in the forthcoming final Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission report.

The agency has 180 days to respond to the petition.

## Categories

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