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Cola caramel ban sought after cancer link made

Group petitions FDA for ban on ammonia- containing colourings used in some soft drinks

WASHINGTON — Some chemically enhanced caramel food colourings used in widely consumed cola drinks could cause cancer and should be banned, a U. S. consumer advocacy group urged the Food and Drug Administration Wednesday.



JENNIFER S. ALTMAN/ BLOOMBERG NEWS FILES

A U. S. consumer advocacy group is asking the FDA to ban some chemically enhanced caramel food colourings.

Pure caramel is made from melted sugar; but two other approved versions to colour food products include the chemical ammonia and produce compounds shown to cause various cancers in animal studies, the U. S. Center for Science in the Public Interest said in a statement.

The group is petitioning the FDA to ban the ammonia-containing caramels, which are also used in other dark-coloured soft drinks.

The chemical reaction between sugar and ammonia can form carcinogens and " still may be causing thousands of cancers in the U. S. population," the group said, citing animal studies conducted by government researchers.

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