THE HIDDEN CHEMICAL PIPELINE

INTO AMERICA'S FOOD SUPPLY

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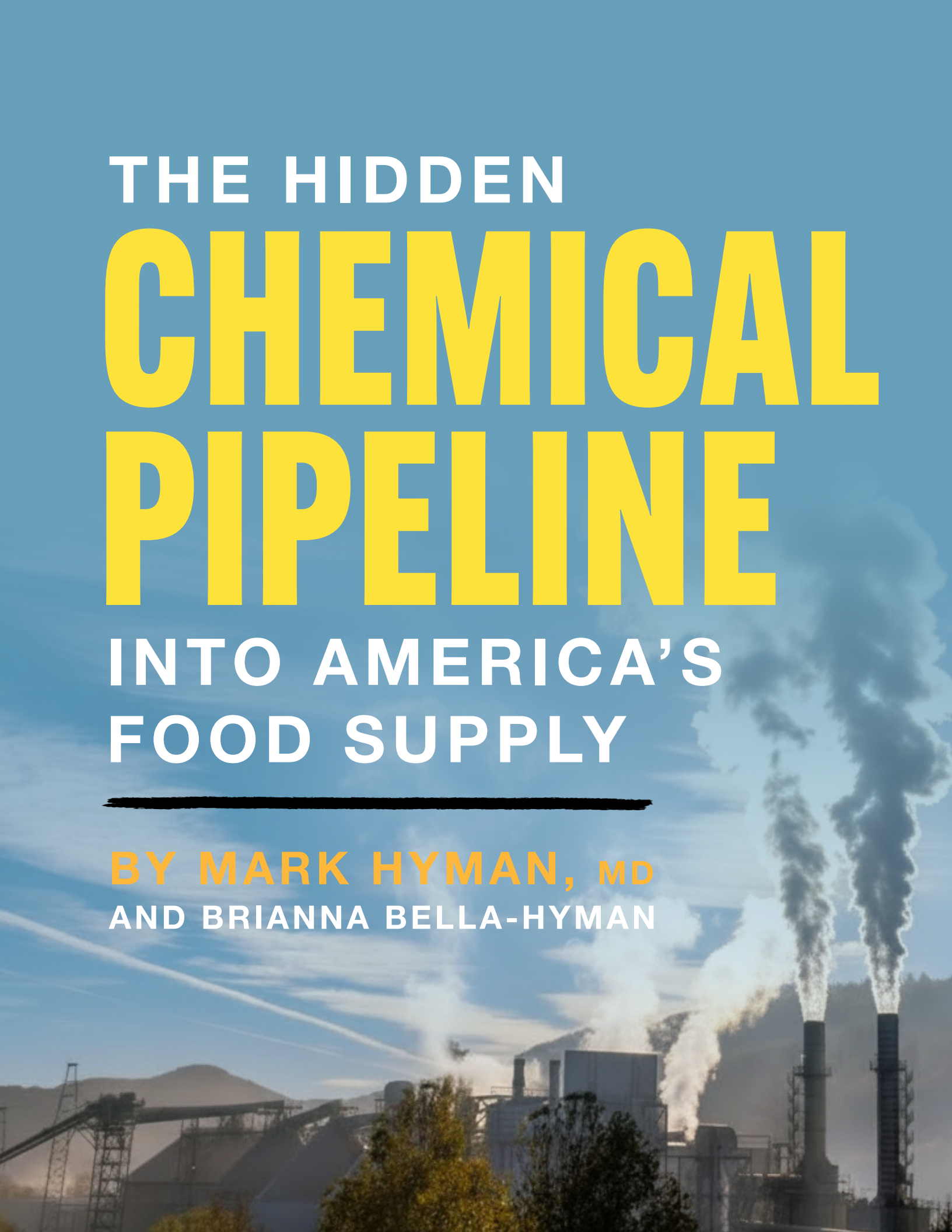


THE HIDDEN CHEMICAL PIPELINE INTO AMERICA'S FOOD SUPPLY

A loophole built for salt and cinnamon now greenlights thousands of synthetic additives—many never reviewed by the FDA and banned in other countries.

The average American now eats what is essentially a junk-food diet: about 60% of adult calories come from ultra-processed foods—and for kids, it's over 70%. Even if you're "trying to eat healthy," you've probably stood in a grocery aisle squinting at a label and thinking: What on earth is this stuff?

You're not imagining it. Most food labels might as well be written in another language.

To understand why there are so many mystery ingredients in everyday foods, you have to know about the FDA's GRAS loophole.

GRAS: "GENERALLY RECOGNIZED AS SAFE"... BUT FOR WHOM?

Under the 1958 Food Additives Amendment, any intentionally-added substance is supposed to undergo FDA review—unless it's GRAS: Generally Recognized as Safe.

Originally, GRAS was meant for ingredients like:

- Salt
- Vinegar
- Vanilla
- Baking powder
- Cinnamon

These are things humans have eaten for generations, that your grandmother probably cooked with, and that your body evolved to recognize as "food."

But over time, under relentless industry pressure and chronic underfunding, the GRAS system morphed into something else entirely:

- Companies (or industry trade groups) can self-declare new chemicals as GRAS
- They can do it without publishing safety data or undergoing any meaningful independent review
- Many GRAS panels are populated by experts with direct financial ties to the very companies whose additives they're evaluating

A 2013 *JAMA Internal Medicine* study put it plainly: financial conflicts of interest were "ubiquitous" in GRAS determinations, and the process offers no assurance of safety.

Where has that gotten us?

- Over 10,000 additives are now allowed in US food
- Roughly 43% of them have entered the market via GRAS self-determination by Big Food itself (aka, no oversight whatsoever)
- Fewer than 5% have been adequately tested for long-term safety
- The average American eats 5–9 pounds of these additives every year

Consumer groups have been waving the red flag for years. In response, the FDA has often taken a surreal stance: acknowledging that certain additives cause cancer in animals, but insisting they're "not harmful" to humans—while quietly removing them to comply with technical legal requirements.

It's a regulatory philosophy that amounts to: "We'll wait until there's enough damage to be undeniable."

Regulatory Double Standard: Americans as Second-Class Consumers

Perhaps the most infuriating evidence that this is a choice, not a technological limitation, is the transatlantic double standard.

The very same multinational companies that sell Americans ultra-processed products loaded with dyes, preservatives, and additives already make cleaner versions for Europe, the UK, and other countries with stricter rules.

HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES:

Kraft Mac & Cheese

- US: Colored with Yellow 5 and Yellow 6, linked to behavioral issues and banned or restricted in the EU
- Europe: Colored with paprika and beta-carotene—natural alternatives

Fanta Orange

- UK: Contains real orange juice, fewer additives, no petroleum-based dyes
- US: High-fructose corn syrup, artificial flavors, Red 40 and Yellow 6, dyes restricted or labeled in the EU due to hyperactivity and carcinogenic concerns

Kellogg's cereals (Froot Loops, Frosted Flakes, etc.)

- US: Synthetic dyes (Red 40, Blue 1, Yellow 6) + BHT, a preservative flagged as a possible carcinogen and banned in the EU and Japan
- Europe: Natural colors, no BHT

Same corporations. Same brands. Different rules—because other governments demanded better.

In the US, they don't have to. So they don't.

2025 ACTIVISM: THE BEGINNING OF A BACKLASH

The good news: people are waking up.

- Food activists like Vani Hari (Food Babe) have dragged ingredients like artificial dyes and potassium bromate into the spotlight, forcing companies and regulators to respond
- Campaigns calling out Kellogg's for using synthetic dyes in US cereals but not in Europe went viral in late 2024, pressuring the company—and the FDA—to act
- On January 15, 2025, the FDA finally banned Red No. 3 in foods, citing cancer concerns—decades after other countries restricted it

At the same time, the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) agenda has been pushing to:

- Align US safety standards more closely with Europe's
- Revisit the GRAS system
- Eliminate some of the most egregious chemicals from the food supply within a defined timeframe

Industry, meanwhile, is not rolling over. The Consumer Brands Association (the frustratingly sophisticated Big Food trade association) and others are:

- Defending the GRAS system that lets companies self-police
- Lobbying to block stricter state-level rules in the name of avoiding a "regulatory patchwork"
- Pushing for weak, industry-friendly national standards instead

The pattern is familiar: when state or grassroots action gathers momentum, industry tries to pull decision-making back to the level where its lobbying has the most power.

A SHORTLIST OF "WHY IS THIS STILL LEGAL" INGREDIENTS

This is just a sampling, but it illustrates the problem:

Potassium bromate & azodicarbonamide – Used in bread and baked goods to improve texture; classified as a possible human carcinogen. Banned in the EU, Canada, and elsewhere. In Singapore, using potassium bromate can mean jail time and massive fines. Still allowed in the US, though public pressure has pushed some chains to drop it.

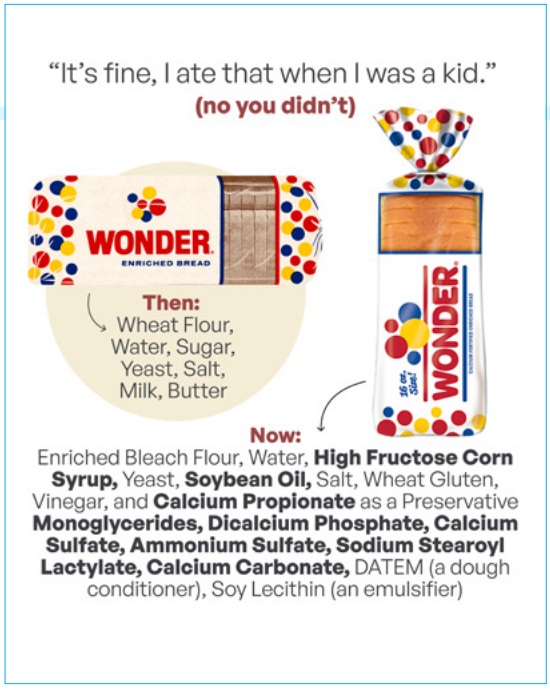
Brominated vegetable oil (BVO) – An emulsifier used in some sodas and sports drinks. Bromine is also used in flame retardants and is linked to neurological and skin issues. Banned in the EU, Canada, Japan, and India. Still legal here.

rBST / rBGH – Synthetic growth hormones used to boost milk production in dairy cows. Banned in Canada, the EU, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. Still permitted in the US, with labeling left largely to voluntary practices.

Synthetic dyes (Red 40, Yellow 5, Yellow 6, etc.) – Restricted or labeled in Europe with warnings about effects on children's behavior. In the US, they remain widely used in cereals, snacks, drinks, condiments, and "kid foods."

BHA and BHT – Preservatives used in cereals, snack foods, and oils. BHA is listed by US health authorities as "reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen" and is still allowed in many products kids eat daily.

None of these are required to produce safe, appealing food. Companies have already shown they can reformulate when forced to.



WE'VE SEEN THIS MOVIE BEFORE: THE TRANS FAT STORY

If this all sounds hopeless, remember trans fats.

For decades, partially hydrogenated oils—a man-made fat—were marketed as a heart-healthy alternative to butter and lard. Early evidence that trans fats promoted heart disease emerged as far back as the 1960s–70s. It took 50 years, and a massive body of research to move trans fats to the Big Food sidelines, where it belongs.

Trans fats show two things at once:

1. Regulators can be captured and extremely slow to act when powerful industries benefit from the status quo
2. Bold policy + relentless public pressure can still win, and save lives

So where are we now?

- Americans are eating diets dominated by ultra-processed foods
- Labels are engineered to obscure, not illuminate
- The GRAS system allows thousands of under-tested chemicals into our food

- The same companies make cleaner products for other countries while giving us the cheap, chemical-heavy versions
- Consumer pressure, activism, and emerging policy agendas (like MAHA) are beginning to push back—but industry is fighting every inch

The core question isn't whether they can make safer, simpler food. They already do—just not consistently for Americans.

The real question is: How long are we willing to accept a system where US consumers are treated as the dumping ground for the lowest standard food that corporations can legally get away with?

If trans fats taught us anything, it's this:

- Science alone does not win
- Quiet concern does not win
- What wins is public will + policy with teeth

And that's exactly what the Food Fix moment is about—moving from awareness of the chemical games in our food system to a coordinated demand for something radically simple:

**REAL FOOD.
TRANSPARENT LABELS.
PROVEN SAFETY
BEFORE PROFIT.**

CURIOUS HOW THE GRAS CONTROVERSY AFFECTS YOUR DIET?

Explore the full story (and the solutions) in **Food Fix Uncensored**, coming to book stores near you on **February 10**. It reveals the corruption and collusion that keeps these food-stuffs in your food, and gives you the tools to demand change.

Pre-order Today!