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PURE FUN--There is a new candy company that is built upon traditional values and the recognition of just how chemicalized the conventional food chain and specifically candy, can be.

Everywhere are the ingredients of my childhood—the glucose, corn syrup, modified corn starch, potassium sorbate, palm oil, the citric acid, ammonium bicarbonate, BHT and mononitrates that buoyed me, those humble chemicals upon which empires have been built.

The new guard is Pure Fun, an organic, vegan, kosher, pesticide-free non-GMO (genetically modified organism) candy maker. At Pure Fun, president and founder Luna Roth delivers information on traditional candy additives, preservatives and artificial coloring. "Do you really want to put that in your body?" she asks. The confectioner is less than four years old and leader of a growing trend. "Do you have any idea what you are putting in your child's body..." comes the cry from the Organics.

Luna Roth established Pure Fun four years ago to create candy without synthetic additives, preservatives, artificial colors or flavors. A heavy smoker who was diagnosed with lung cancer several years ago, Roth survived, and her ruthlessly organic daughter tutored her on the virtues of a healthy diet. The idea for healthy candy followed.

Roth is in her late 50's and is an evangelist in the cause of organic candy. The timing is certainly right: rerecently there has been widely reported news that food additives contribute to hyperactivity and allergies, based on a study published in *The Lancet*. This was good news for Pure Fun, which has been preaching a version of this message for years. "We don't know what the cumulative effects are," Roth says. "These ingredients are slow killers.

Corn syrup, for example, a staple ingredient in candy, and one of the least dangerous-looking, presents problems, as the corn that is sometimes used is engineered with a virus to introduce a neurotoxic insecticidal protein that causes paralysis in the bugs that eat it. The cassava plant is the source of Tapioca and cassava is well known for its cyanide properties. The FDA (food and drug administration) and World Health Organization have maximum tolerances allowable for cyanide in foods--"What is your cyanide tolerance?" Roth asks. This is a familiar pattern, one that has followed candy ingredients for decades. You can spend a really depressing hour googling the ingredients from the wrapper of the candy you just ate. The ongoing theme, more than anything, is doubt: possibly carcinogenic; may cause diarrhea, blindness and nausea; did produce tumors in laboratory rats. "We just don't know what these ingredients are doing," Roth says. "Why take the chance?"

Pure Fun uses brown-rice syrup, evaporated cane juice, all natural fruit or spice flavors and colors derived from beets, alfalfa, turmeric and other fruits and vegetables to sweeten and color everything from root beer flavored cotton candy to ginger spice "jaw boulders." "It's a return to the natural order," says Roth, "to how things were once made." The candy tastes good—a re-emergence of actual rather than engineered flavours.

The postwar consumer explosion began the chemical era of candy. Chemicals were cheaper than natural ingredients, and they made the product stable and controllable. Candy makers were no longer at the mercy of the cherry crop for cherry flavor. The common dyes in candy—red #40, yellow #5 and #6, and blue #1—have been banned in many developed nations, but are still in use in Canada and the U.S. Yellow #5, for example, is a synthetic dye derived from coal tar and linked to allergies and cancer.

Pure Fun sells in specialty, health food stores and many major North American supermarkets already carry the company's products.

Cost is at the crux of the industry. On the one hand, organic foods are hugely a growing trend. But chemical foods are much cheaper to produce, and the profit margins on organics aren't as high.