

FILED  
2/21/2023 9:37 PM  
IRIS Y. MARTINEZ  
CIRCUIT CLERK  
COOK COUNTY, IL  
2023CH01703  
Calendar, 10  
21565015

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
CHANCERY DIVISION**

NORAH FLAHERTY, individually and on  
behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

HELLO PRODUCTS LLC

Defendant.

Case No. **2023CH01703**

**CLASS ACTION  
COMPLAINT**

**JURY DEMANDED**

Now comes the Plaintiff, NORAH FLAHERTY (“Plaintiff”), individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, by and through his attorneys, and for her Class Action Complaint against the Defendant, HELLO PRODUCTS LLC (“Defendant”), Plaintiff alleges and states as follows:

**PRELIMINARY STATEMENT**

1. This is an action for damages, injunctive relief, and any other available legal or equitable remedies, for violations of Illinois Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Businesses Practices Act (“ILCFDA”), 815 ILCS 505/1 *et seq.*, common law fraud, and unjust enrichment, resulting from the illegal actions of Defendant, in intentionally labeling its products with false and misleading claims that they contain no artificial sweeteners, when the products contain the artificial sweeteners sorbitol and xylitol. Plaintiff alleges as follows upon personal knowledge as to herself and her own acts and experiences, and, as to all other matters, upon information and belief, including investigation conducted by her attorneys.

FILED DATE: 2/21/2023 9:37 PM 2023CH01703

**PARTIES**

2. Plaintiff is an individual who was at all relevant times residing in Chicago, Illinois.

3. Defendant is a Delaware limited liability company, whose principal place of business is located in North Bergen, New Jersey.

4. At all times relevant hereto, Defendant was engaged in the marketing, manufacturing, and sale of person care products.

**FACTS COMMON TO ALL COUNTS**

5. Defendant manufactures, advertises, markets, sells, and distributes personal care throughout the United States.

6. During the Class Period Defendant sold the following toothpastes (the “Products”) labeled, marketed, and advertised as containing no artificial sweeteners but which contain the artificial sweeteners sorbitol and xylitol:

- a. Hello fresh naturally whitening fluoride toothpaste farm grown mint;
- b. Hello activated charcoal fluoride free toothpaste fresh mint and coconut oil;
- c. Hello antiplaque + whitening fluoride free toothpaste farm grown peppermint;
- d. Hello unicorn sparkle fluoride toothpaste bubble gum;
- e. Hello bye bye bacteria fluoride toothpaste;
- f. Hello kids dragon dazzle fluoride toothpaste;
- g. Hello kids fluoride free toothpaste natural watermelon;
- h. Hello activated charcoal epic whitening fluoride toothpaste;
- i. Hello wild strawberry kids fluoride toothpaste;
- j. Hello antiplaque + whitening toothpaste tablets;

FILED DATE: 2/21/2023 9:37 PM 2023CH01703

- k. Hello kids juicy grape fluoride toothpaste;
- l. Hello toddler training toothpaste apple flavor;
- m. Hello activated charcoal toothpaste tablets;
- n. Hello good night lavender and chamomile fluoride free toothpaste;
- o. Hello good morning meyer lemon fluoride free toothpaste;
- p. Hello watermelon toothpaste tablets;
- q. Hello gum nourishmint fluoride toothpaste;
- r. Hello freakin' fresh + whitening fluoride free toothpaste.

7. All of the Products listed in Paragraph No 6. above are substantially similar because all Products are toothpastes, all products contain the same false “no artificial sweeteners” labeling, all Products contain the same challenged ingredients sorbitol and xylitol.

8. Plaintiff, like any reasonable consumer, expects that products advertised as containing no artificial sweeteners will only be sweetened with natural sweeteners and will not contain artificial sweeteners.

9. On January 7, 2023, Plaintiff purchased a Hello fresh naturally whitening fluoride toothpaste farm grown mint Product from a target located at 2112 W. Peterson Ave, in Chicago.

10. Hydrogenation is a synthetic reaction that between hydrogen gas and an unsaturated double bond in a molecule under high pressure in the presence of a metal catalyst. <sup>1</sup>

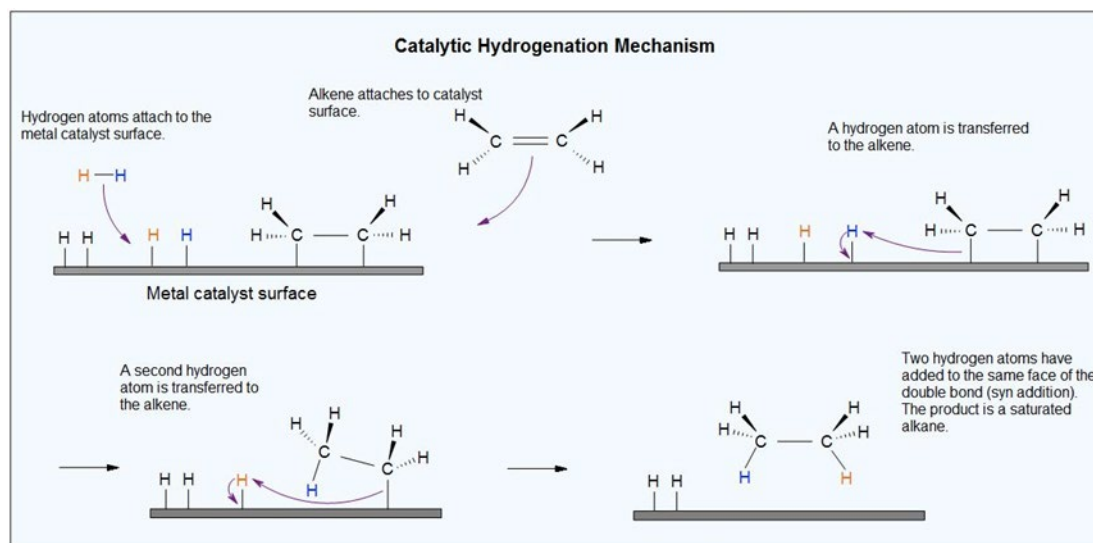
///

///

---

<sup>1</sup> Monoj K Gupta, Practical Guide To Vegetable Oil Processing <https://www.sciencedirect.com/book/9781630670504/practical-guide-to-vegetable-oil-processing>

11. The following diagram depicts the hydrogenation process: <sup>2</sup>



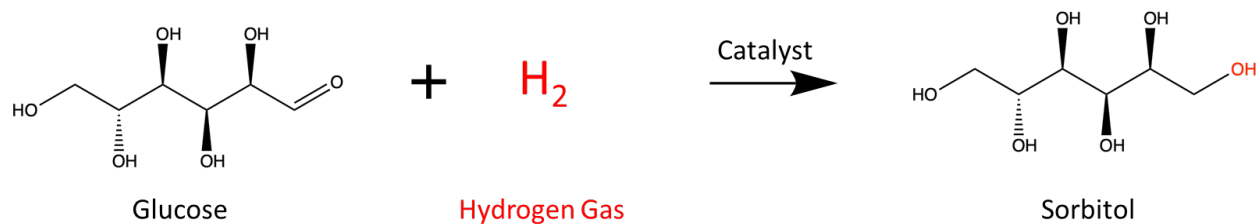
12. This synthetic reaction must occur under a temperature of 212–302°F and a pressure of 98–148 times standard atmospheric pressure. In addition, for the reaction to occur a metal catalyst typically nickel, molybdenum, palladium, or platinum must be present alongside hydrogen gas.

13. As demonstrated in Paragraphs No. 10 through 12 above, natural substances are chemically altered when reacted with a metal catalyst in the presence of hydrogen gas so that they are different than how they naturally occur. Furthermore, this chemical change results from a non-naturally occurring reaction. As a result, all the hydrogenated ingredients in the Products are artificial.

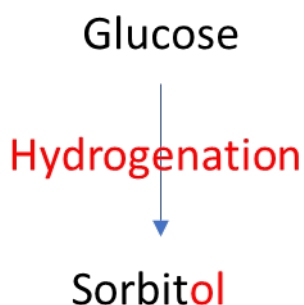
14. Sorbitol is a synthetic chemical prepared by hydrogenation of starch or glucose syrups. In addition, for the reaction to occur a metal catalyst typically nickel, molybdenum, palladium, or platinum must be present alongside hydrogen gas.

<sup>2</sup> Catalytic Hydrogenation of Alkenes, [https://chem.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Organic\\_Chemistry/Supplemental\\_Modules\\_\(Organic\\_Chemistry\)/Alkenes/Reactivity\\_of\\_Alkenes/Catalytic\\_Hydrogenation](https://chem.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Organic_Chemistry/Supplemental_Modules_(Organic_Chemistry)/Alkenes/Reactivity_of_Alkenes/Catalytic_Hydrogenation)

15. The following are skeletal formulas of the reaction necessary to create sorbitol:

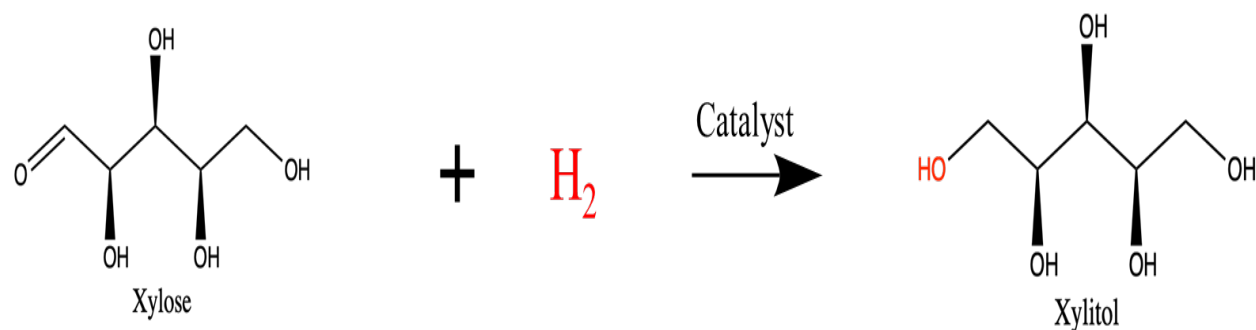


16. The following chart depicts the chemical steps between natural glucose and the artificial sorbitol:



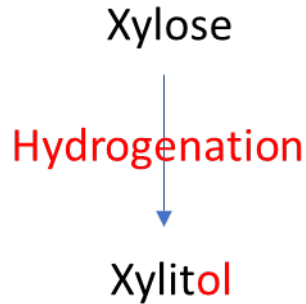
17. Xylitol is a synthetic chemical prepared by hydrogenation of xylose. In addition, for the reaction to occur a metal catalyst typically nickel, molybdenum, palladium, or platinum must be present alongside hydrogen gas.

18. The following are skeletal formulas of the reaction necessary to create xylitol:



///

19. The following chart depicts the chemical steps between natural xylose and the artificial xylitol:



20. The following are examples of the Products' fraudulent labeling:



FILED DATE: 2/21/2023 9:37 PM 2023CH01703

FILED DATE: 2/21/2023 9:37 PM 2023CH01703







21. Persons, like Plaintiff herein, have an interest in purchasing products that do not contain false and misleading claims with regards to the contents of the Products.

22. By making false and misleading claims about the Products, Defendant impaired Plaintiff's ability to choose the type and quality of products she chose to buy.

23. Therefore, Plaintiff has been deprived of her legally protected interest to obtain true and accurate information about her consumer products as required by law.

24. As a result of Defendant's fraudulent labeling, Plaintiff and the Class have been misled into purchasing Products that did not provide them with the benefit of the bargain they paid money for, namely that the Products would contain no artificial sweeteners.

25. As a result of Defendant's fraudulent labeling, Plaintiff and the Class paid a price premium for a premium Product, but instead received a non-premium Product with artificial sweeteners.

26. Plaintiff and the Class purchased Defendant's Products because Defendant's advertising claimed that the Products contained no artificial sweeteners.

27. Furthermore, due to Defendant's intentional, deceitful practice of falsely labeling the Products as containing no artificial sweeteners when they do, Plaintiff could not have known that the Product contained artificial sweeteners.

28. Plaintiff was unaware that the Product contained artificial sweetener when she purchased it.



29. Worse than the lost money, Plaintiff, the Class, and Sub-Class were deprived of their protected interest to choose the type and quality of products they use on their bodies.

30. Defendant, and not Plaintiff, the Class, or Sub-Class, knew or should have known that labeling, marketing, and selling the Products as containing no artificial sweeteners was false, deceptive, and misleading, and that Plaintiff, the Class, and Sub-Class members would not be able to tell the Products they purchased contained artificial sweeteners unless Defendant expressly told them.

31. On information and belief, Defendant employs professional chemists to create the chemical formulas of Defendant's Products. Therefore, Defendant through its employees knew or should have known that sorbitol and xylitol are not naturally occurring, and that by adding sorbitol and xylitol to its Products they would contain artificial sweeteners.

32. On information and belief, Defendant did know that Products contained artificial sweeteners but chose to label the Products as containing no artificial sweeteners because it did not believe its customers were well educated enough to know the difference.

33. As a result of Defendant's acts and omissions outlined above, Plaintiff has suffered concrete and particularized injuries and harm, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Lost money;
- b. Wasting Plaintiff's time; and
- c. Stress, aggravation, frustration, loss of trust, loss of serenity, and loss of confidence in product labeling.

#### **CLASS ALLEGATIONS**

34. Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of herself and all others similarly situated, as a member of the proposed class (the "Class"), defined as follows:

All persons within the United States who purchased the Products within five years prior to the filing of the Complaint through the date of class certification.

35. Plaintiff also brings this action on behalf of herself and all others similarly situated, as a member of the proposed sub-class (the “Sub-Class”), defined as follows

All persons within the State of Illinois who purchased the Products within five years prior to the filing of the Complaint through the date of class certification.

36. The Class and the Sub-Class satisfy all of the requirements of the Illinois Code of Civil Procedure for maintaining a class action, specifically:

- a. Upon information and belief, the Class and the Sub-Class are so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable. On information and belief there are hundreds, if not thousands of individuals in the United States and the State of Illinois who purchased the products within the applicable statute of limitations period.
- b. There are questions of fact and/or law which are common to the Class and the Sub-Class, and which predominate over questions affecting any individual Class or Sub-Class members. These common questions of fact and law include, but are not limited to:
  - i. Whether Defendant disseminated false and misleading information by claiming the Products did not contain artificial sweeteners when they did;
  - ii. Whether the Class and Sub-Class members were informed that the Products contained artificial sweeteners;
  - iii. Whether the Products contain artificial sweeteners;

- iv. Whether Defendant's conduct was unfair and deceptive;
  - v. Whether Defendant unjustly enriched itself as a result of the unlawful conduct alleged above;
  - vii. Whether there should be a tolling of the statute of limitations; and
  - viii. Whether the Class and Sub-Class members are entitled to restitution, actual damages, punitive damages, and attorneys' fees and costs.
- c. Plaintiff's claims are typical of the Class and the Sub-Class, which all arise from the same operative set of facts and are based on the same legal theories
  - d. Plaintiff has no interests adverse or antagonistic to the interests of the other members of the Class and the Sub-Class.
  - e. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the Class and the Sub-Class and Plaintiff has retained experienced and competent attorneys to represent the Class and the Sub-Class.
  - f. This class action is a fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy alleged herein. Plaintiff anticipates that no unusual difficulties are likely to be encountered in the management of this class action.
  - g. This class action will permit large numbers of similarly situated persons to prosecute their common claims in a single forum simultaneously and without the duplication of effort and expense that numerous individual actions would engender. This class action will also permit the adjudication of relatively small claims by many Class and Sub-Class members who would not otherwise be able to afford to seek legal redress for the wrongs complained of herein. Absent a class action, Class and Sub-Class members

will continue to suffer losses of legally protected rights, as well as monetary damages. If Defendants' conduct is allowed proceed to without remedy, Defendants will continue to benefit financially from such conduct.

- h. Defendants have acted on grounds generally applicable to the entire Class and Sub-Class, thereby making it appropriate for the Court to order final monetary, injunctive, and declaratory relief with respect to the Class and the Sub-Class as a whole.

37. Defendant, its employees and agents are excluded from the Class and Sub-Class. Plaintiff does not know the number of members in the Class and Sub-Class, but believes the members number in the thousands, if not more. Thus, this matter should be certified as a Class Action to assist in the expeditious litigation of the matter.

38. The size and definition of the Class and Sub-Class can be identified by Defendant's own records.

**COUNT I**  
**VIOLATIONS OF THE ILLINOIS CONSUMER FRAUD AND**  
**DECEPTIVE BUSINESS PRACTICES ACT, 815 ILCS 505/1, et seq.**

39. Plaintiff incorporates all of the allegations and statements made in Paragraphs 1 through 38 above as if fully reiterated herein.

40. Plaintiff is a "person" as defined in 815 ILCS 505/1(c), as she is a natural person.

41. Defendant is a "person" as defined in 815 ILCS 505/1(c), as it is a company and a business entity and/or association.

42. 815 ILCS 505/2 states:

Unfair methods of competition and unfair or deceptive acts or practices, including but not limited to the use or employment of any deception fraud, false pretense, false promise, misrepresentation or the concealment, suppression or omission of any material fact, with

intent that others rely upon the concealment, suppression or omission of such material fact, or the use or employment of any practice described in Section 2 of the “Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act”, approved August 5, 1965, in the conduct of any trade or commerce are hereby declared unlawful whether any person has in fact been misled, deceived or damaged thereby.

43. Through its representation that the Products contained no artificial sweeteners, Defendant made false promises, misrepresentations, concealments, suppressions, and omissions of material facts, with the intent that Plaintiff rely upon said false promises, misrepresentations, concealments, suppressions, and omissions of material facts.

44. 815 ILCS 505/10a states:

(a) Any person who suffers actual damage as a result of a violation of this Act committed by any other person may bring an action against such person. The court, in its discretion may award actual economic damages or any other relief which the court deems proper...

(c) [T]he Court may grant injunctive relief where appropriate and may award, in addition to the relief provided in this Section, reasonable attorney’s fees and costs to the prevailing party.

45. In taking the actions and omissions set forth above, and making the false promises, misrepresentations, concealments, suppressions, and omissions of material facts set forth above, Defendant violated the Illinois Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act, including, but not limited to, 815 ILCS 505/2.

46. Defendant failed to comply with the requirements of the ILCFA, including, but not limited to, 815 ILCS 505/2 as to the Class and Sub-Class members with respect to the above-alleged transactions

47. By reason thereof, Plaintiff is entitled to a judgment against Defendant, declaring that Defendant’s conduct violated 815 ILCS 505/2, enjoining Defendant from engaging in similar conduct in the future, and awarding actual damages, punitive damages, injunctive relief, costs, and

attorneys' fees.

**PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

Wherefore, Plaintiff prays for a judgment against Defendant as follows:

- a. An order certifying the Class and the Sub-Class and appointing Plaintiff as Representative of the Class and the Sub-Class;
- b. An order certifying the undersigned counsel as the Class and Sub-Class Counsel;
- c. An order requiring Defendant, at its own cost, to notify all members of the Class and the Sub-Class of the unlawful, unfair, deceptive, and unconscionable conduct herein;
- d. Judgment against Defendant in an amount to be determined at trial;
- e. An order for injunctive relief prohibiting such conduct by Defendant in the future;
- f. Judgment against Defendant for Plaintiff's attorneys' fees, court costs, and other litigation costs; and
- g. Any other relief deemed just and proper by this Court.

**COUNT II**  
**COMMON LAW FRAUD**

48. Plaintiff incorporates all of the allegations and statements made in Paragraphs 1 through 38 above as if fully reiterated herein.

49. Through its false statements that the Products contained no artificial sweeteners, Defendant made false statements of material fact.

50. At the time Defendant made its statements to Plaintiff that the Products contained

no artificial sweeteners, it knew, or reasonably should have known, that the statements described above were false.

51. At the time Defendant made the statements to Plaintiff, Defendant intended to induce Plaintiff to purchase the Products.

52. Plaintiff relied upon the truth of the statements described above and purchased the Products, only to find that the Product she purchased contained artificial sweeteners.

53. As a result of their reasonable reliance upon Defendant's false statements of material fact as set forth above, Plaintiff and other members of the Class and Sub-Class have suffered concrete and particularized injuries, harm, and damages which include, but are not limited to, the loss of money spent on products they did not want to buy, and stress, aggravation, frustration, inconvenience, emotional distress, mental anguish, and similar categories of damages.

#### **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

Wherefore, Plaintiff prays for a judgment against Defendant as follows:

- a. An order certifying the Class and the Sub-Class and appointing Plaintiff as Representative of the Class and the Sub-Class;
- b. An order certifying the undersigned counsel as the Class and Sub-Class Counsel;
- c. An order requiring Defendant, at its own cost, to notify all members of the Class and the Sub-Class of the unlawful, unfair, deceptive, and unconscionable conduct herein;
- d. Judgment against Defendant in an amount to be determined at trial;
- e. An order for injunctive relief prohibiting such conduct by Defendant in the future;



- f. Judgment against Defendant for Plaintiff's attorneys' fees, court costs, and other litigation costs; and
- g. Any other relief deemed just and proper by this Court.

**COUNT III**  
**UNJUST ENRICHMENT**

54. Plaintiff incorporates all of the allegations and statements made in Paragraphs 1 through 38 above as if fully reiterated herein.

55. Plaintiff conferred monetary benefits to Defendant by purchasing the Products.

56. Defendant has been unjustly enriched by retaining the revenues derived from Plaintiff's purchase of the Products based on the false statements that the Products did not contain artificial sweeteners.

57. Defendant's retention of the revenue it received from Plaintiff, and the Class and Sub-Class members, is unjust and inequitable because Defendant's false statements caused injuries to Plaintiff, and the Class and Sub-Class members, as they would not have purchased the Products, or would not have paid a premium price, if they knew the Products contained artificial sweeteners.

58. Defendant's unjust retention of the benefits conferred on it by Plaintiff, and the Class and Sub-Class members, entitles Plaintiff, and the Class and Sub-Class members, to restitution of the money they paid to Defendant for the Products.

**PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

Wherefore, Plaintiff prays for a judgment against Defendant as follows:

- h. An order certifying the Class and the Sub-Class and appointing Plaintiff as Representative of the Class and the Sub-Class;
- i. An order certifying the undersigned counsel as the Class and Sub-Class Counsel;

- j. An order requiring Defendant, at its own cost, to notify all members of the Class and the Sub-Class of the unlawful, unfair, deceptive, and unconscionable conduct herein;
- k. Judgment against Defendant in an amount to be determined at trial;
- l. An order for injunctive relief prohibiting such conduct by Defendant in the future;
- m. Judgment against Defendant for Plaintiff's attorneys' fees, court costs, and other litigation costs; and
- n. Any other relief deemed just and proper by this Court.

**JURY DEMAND**

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury on all issues in this action so triable, except for any issues relating to the amount of attorneys' fees and costs to be awarded should Plaintiff prevail on any of his claims in this action.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

NORAH FLAHERTY



---

Steve G. Perry  
Attorney for Plaintiff  
Cook County Attorney No.: 63294  
Illinois Attorney No. 6330283  
Law Offices of Todd M. Friedman, P.C.  
707 Skokie Blvd., Suite 600  
Northbrook, IL 60062  
Phone: (224) 218-0875  
Fax: (866) 633-0228  
Steven.perry@toddfllaw.com

# ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: [Hello Toothpastes Falsely Advertised as Free of Artificial Sweeteners, Class Action Says](#)

---