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# Necco Wafers candies make a sweet comeback after 2-year absence

After the New England Confectionery Company went bankrupt in 2018, all seemed lost until Spangler Candy stepped up to the plate.



Goya pork rinds, Sylvia's soul food products, Necco wafer candyGetty Images

May 27, 2020, 4:16 PM EDT / Source: TODAY

**By Randee Dawn**

If you've been craving the classic candy known as Necco Wafers, for the past two years, you've been out of luck. Amazon doesn't have them. Ebay might – for a price – but bear in mind that any rolls would be at least two years old.

Soon, that's about to change.

This week, in an exclusive interview with [TODAY Food](#), Kirk Vashaw, the chairman and CEO of Spangler Candy, revealed that fresh rolls of Necco Wafers are set to hit store shelves in just a few days.

The candies come in eight distinct flavors; only the chocolate one might seem a bit different. Courtesy of Spangler Candy

"We've always admired the brand and how it's woven in with the fabric of our culture," Vashaw said. "It's neat to be eating a candy that was carried by Civil War soldiers, and taken on Arctic and Antarctic expeditions, and issued to GIs in World War II as a morale booster. It's a piece of our history."

He's right: Necco Wafers (the name is an acronym for the company that created the candies in 1847, the New England Confectionery Company) are a long-lasting, old-fashioned treat that's been around for a very, very long time.

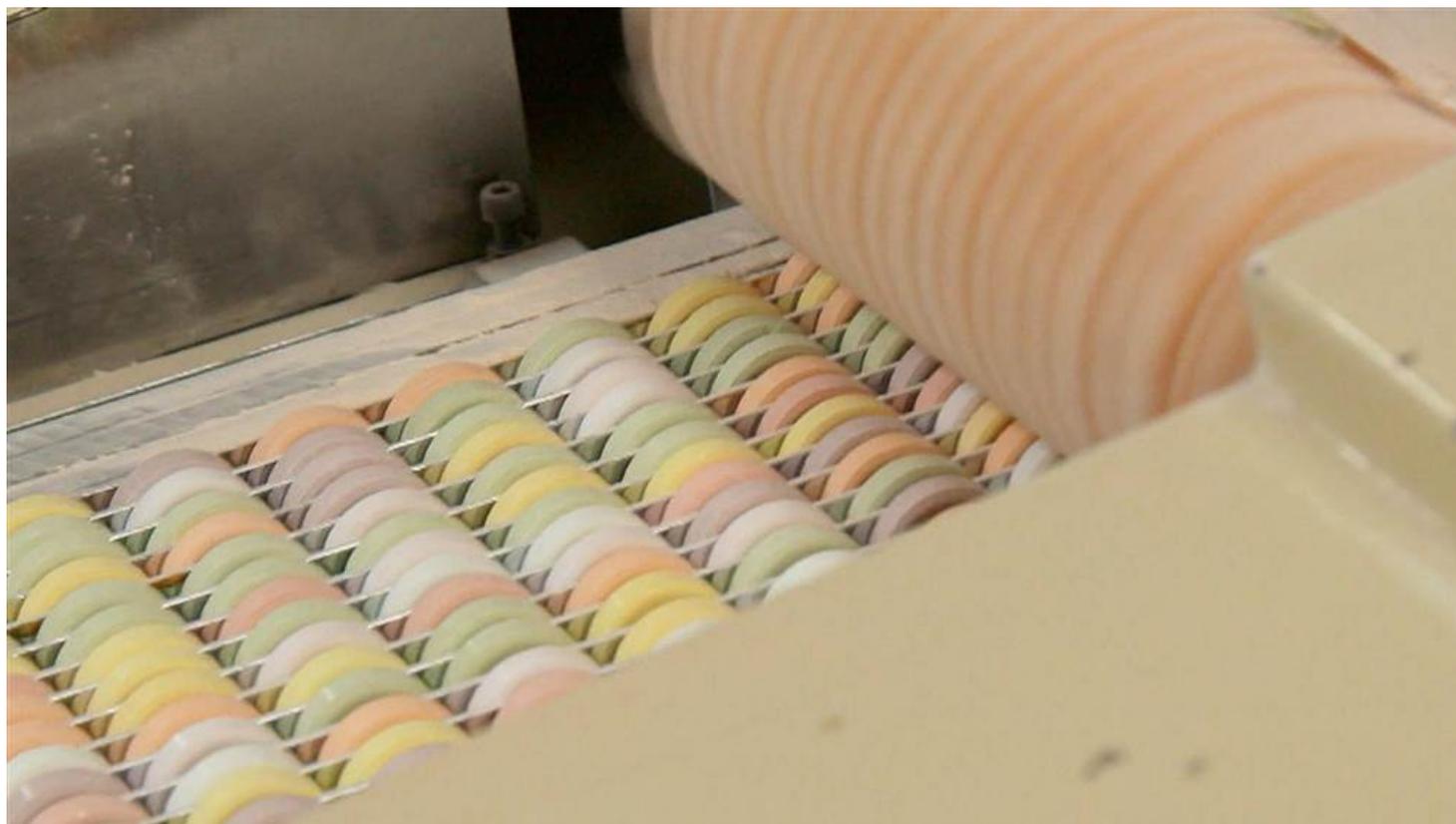
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A wax paper-wrapped roll of the disc-shaped candies comes in a mix of eight flavors (lemon, lime, orange, clove, cinnamon, wintergreen, licorice and chocolate). Previously, all-chocolate rolls have been sold, but are not currently being manufactured.

The candies have proved both durable (they won't melt and travel well) and versatile: Vashaw said kids have used them as shingles on gingerbread houses, adults have used them as poker chips and even young Catholic worshippers have used them to practice taking communion.

But [the Necco factory hit hard times a few years ago](#) and [shuttered abruptly](#) in mid-2018. Assets were auctioned off and Vashaw's Spangler Candy (home to sweets like Dum-Dums lollipops and Circus Peanuts) snapped up several classic Necco brands, including the eponymous wafers and Sweethearts ([which returned this year for Valentine's Day](#)). The company also bought up some of the key equipment used to make Neccos and are currently producing the candies at a facility in Mexico.

Spangler Candy wanted everything to remain as close to the original as possible, down to the wax paper wrapping. Courtesy of Spangler Candy

Fans of the classic recipe will be relieved as Vashaw confirmed that the formula has remained the same. The packaging is the same, too. "We kept the wax wrap around the roll exactly the same," said Vashaw, "and used the same supplier and everything."

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There might be a slight difference in taste with the chocolate wafer, though. "Connoisseurs may notice a slightly richer taste to the cocoa," he explained. "It's the same flavor, but we use a slightly different chocolate. To our palate, it brings out the flavor a bit differently."

But there was no plan to "improve" on what already, for fans, is perfection. "Candy is a simple joy in life and it's a simple reward," said Washaw. "People want the same thing they remember as a kid. That's the beauty of candy – nostalgia."

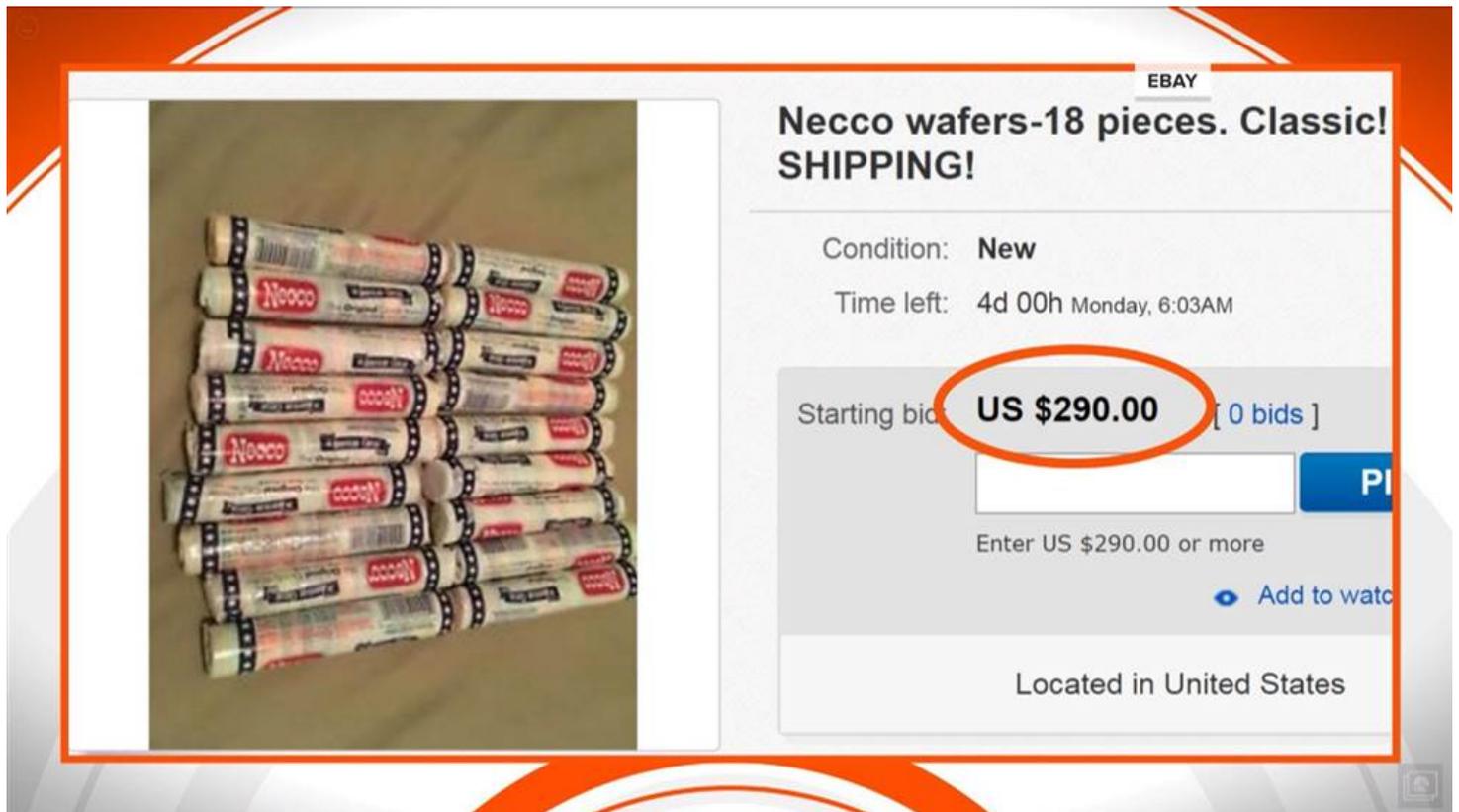
Bringing a famous candy back to market during the COVID-19 pandemic has presented some challenges, said a company spokesperson, but Spangler is enforcing social distancing at its Mexican factory. Employees must also submit to temperature checks and are required to wear face coverings.

"Given the layout of the production lines, most employees are able to easily maintain distance from each other and, in the few places where that is difficult, we have installed barriers," added the spokesperson.

Drugstores and pharmacies nationwide are expected to start getting fresh Necco Wafers by the end of this month or early June. The company expects shipments to other stores will arrive in July.

That's great news for fanatical Necco lovers, who will apparently do anything to seek out the beloved discs – something Washaw discovered personally.

"I was at a candy conference last fall, and someone drove for miles, all the way there, and sought me out to specifically ask about Necco Wafers," he said, adding, "We're running as fast as we can and hope to keep up with demand this summer."



EBAY

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