

How are message heart sweets made?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Message sweets have been around since Victorian times, when conversation lozenges carried little printed sayings. Today two kinds on sale are Britain's Love Hearts and America's Sweethearts, often called conversation hearts. They look alike, but they are made in different ways: see [Love Hearts](#)

Love Hearts: pressed like a pill

Love Hearts have been made by Swizzels since 1954, at a factory in New Mills, Derbyshire, where the firm moved during the Blitz. They are made by the pressed tablet method, the same way as many pills:

1. **Grind the sugar.** Granulated sugar is ground to a very fine powder.
2. **Split by flavour.** The powder is divided into lines, one for each flavour.
3. **Mix.** Colours, flavourings and other ingredients are added and mixed in.
4. **Press.** The mixture is fed into a machine that compresses it under high pressure into a tablet, and the message is pressed into the front at the same time.
5. **Highlight.** The front is picked out in red food colour, so the message is easier to read.
6. **Mix and pack.** The different colours and flavours are mixed at random and packed, traditionally in tubes of 20.

Each sweet is about 19 mm across and 5 mm high, with a heart outline on the back and the message inside a heart on the front. The body comes in one of six colours: white, yellow, orange, green, purple or red. Because it is pressed powder, it breaks down into a powdery, starchy texture when you chew it.

Conversation hearts: from a dough

America's Sweethearts are made differently. A 2025 account of the factory process in the trade magazine Powder and Bulk Solids describes it:

1. **Mix a dough.** Pulverised sugar goes into a large mixer with corn syrup, gelatin and dextrose.
2. **Flavour and colour.** Flavours and colours are added.
3. **Shape and mark.** Batches of about 500 lb are pressed into heart shapes, and one of more than 500 sayings is marked on each piece.
4. **Dry.** The hearts go into a dryer.
5. **Mix and pack.** The six colours are mixed and packed.

The factory in Cambridge, Massachusetts, run by Necco, made more than 100,000 lb a day in the run up to Valentine's Day, and nearly 8 billion hearts a year. The recipe described there included gelatin, which is not vegetarian, so check the label on any conversation hearts you buy: see [gelatine in sweets explained](#)

How the sayings began

In 1847 the American pharmacist Oliver Chase invented a machine to cut lozenges, and his brother Daniel Chase began printing sayings on the sweets in 1866, with a machine that stamped red vegetable dye on the surface. The early sweets were shaped like seashells, large enough for longer messages, and the heart shaped Sweethearts began in 1901. Spangler Candy Company bought the brand in 2018.

The messages

Most Love Hearts messages are romantic, such as Be Mine, Love You and I Surrender. In 2008 Swizzels ran a competition for ten new messages, and in 2022 it briefly renamed the sweets Kind Hearts for the charity YoungMinds, with messages such as Be Kind and Stay Strong. Swizzels also makes Parma Violets and Drumstick lollies: see [Parma Violets](#)

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