

Whiff of luxury

It had to happen eventually. Someone — a Harvard professor and Illinois Institute of Technology graduate — has developed inhalable chocolate.

The product, called Le Whif, will make its debut in the United States at next month's All Candy Expo, a massive confection-industry gathering at Chicago's McCormick Place. Its inventor, David Edwards, who helped develop inhalable insulin and is working on an inhalable TB vaccination, threw out the idea of breathable food while teaching an engineering sciences class at Harvard several years ago.

Along with several students, Edwards developed a modified inhaler and settled on using chocolate particles that are 80 to 300 microns — too big to enter the lungs and trigger coughing, he said. The device coats the user's mouth with the taste of chocolate — at less than 1 calorie. Edwards envisions people enjoying Le Whif along with a cup of coffee. But he has a larger vision, as well.

"We believe really strongly that there's a whole new way of eating — by aerosol," Edwards, 48, said. "The big picture here is that for thousands of years we've eaten with our hands or, more recently, with chopsticks and forks and things. We're sort of moving on. People have been whiffing [my product] here in Paris for the past few months."

Chocoholics will be able to purchase 24 "whiff" bundles online at the end of the month for about \$50, Edwards said. Each "whiff" contains four puffs.

He said he sees other inhalable food possibilities, like soup or certain spices, but has no plans to take on, say, Chicago-style deep dish pizza.

"I think deep-dish pizza is best left in the pan," Edwards said.