

# CNN This lipstick has been around for decades. Now stores can't keep it in stock



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**New York (CNN Business)** — Clinique's Black Honey lip color launched when Richard Nixon was president, but all these decades later it has gone [viral on TikTok](#). Now, beauty stores and retailers can't keep it on shelves.

After it was introduced in 1971, the lipstick, which is known for its versatility and ability to complement a wide range of skin tones, was dubbed a "black turtleneck for the lips," said Carolyn Dawkins, senior vice president and global chief marketing officer at Clinique, which is owned by Estée Lauder ([EL](#)).

The product debuted in a glassware jar, mimicking a honey pot in honor of its namesake, but the company moved it into its "Almost Lipstick" line in 1989, and sold it out of a tube instead. The shift made it a beauty staple and cult classic for decades. But Black Honey's chic status was catapulted this summer when teens and millennials started talking about the lipstick on TikTok.

"It built momentum within a number of weeks and that quickly moved through to sell-through," Dawkins told CNN Business.

Clinique initially responded to the wave of interest by implementing a wait list for the product on its website — rather than marking it as "sold out." A check of the company's website Tuesday showed this message: "Clinique's #1 lip phenomenon is a TikTok sensation. Purchase Black Honey now to reserve yours. We'll ship it when it arrives."

## Beauty blows up on TikTok

Black Honey's virality is just the latest example of a brand [success story](#) that is tied to interest on TikTok. Beauty trends that originate on the video sharing app "have a direct effect on boosting the sales volume of specific products or brands that are tied to that trend," said Larissa Jensesn, vice president and beauty industry analyst with market research firm NPD Group.

All it takes is one viral video that attracts engagement from other TikTok users and inspires subsequent videos about the product. Similar to Black Honey's surge, last year TikTok [helped turn CeraVe](#), a once-sleepy skincare brand founded in 2005, into a cult favorite.

TikTok users have been posting about the lipstick for more than a month. The hashtags #blackhoney and

#cliniqueblackhoney have so far garnered a combined total of more than 36 million TikTok views.

As the Clinique product began selling out, TikTok users started posting "dupes," or duplicates of Black Honey made by other beauty brands — often at a cheaper price — that have a near-identical shade or formula and produce a similarly desirable effect.

Clinique's price for its Black Honey lipstick is \$20 for 0.06 of an ounce. Some of the "dupes" include a Black Cherry lipstick from makeup brand e.l.f for \$5 and a lip balm from Burt's Bees that sells for \$4.79 at Target.

## Reaching a new demographic

On September 8, TikTok makeup influencer Mikayla Nogueira posted about Black Honey, attracting more than 10 million views with a single video. One user commented, "I'm 48 and been using this since I was 20." Another viewer posted, "Only lipstick my grandma would let me put on while I watched her get ready!" In her own video, Nogueira nodded to the legacy of the product, saying, "It's been around for decades."

"I was completely shocked when this went viral," Nogueira said. "The demographic that purchases this is usually a mature older woman, so to see younger women using it on TikTok is so interesting to me."

## The 90s appeal

Clinique Black Honey "benefits from its 90s background," Michael Nolte, creative director of BEAUTYSTREAMS, an insights platform for the industry, told CNN Business. "The 90s are currently highly trending among Gen Z as an inspirational fashion and make-up period, which partially explains the infatuation of the product among young consumers."

"TikTok lends itself to beauty product virality because the short clip format offers better opportunities to understand and appreciate the texture and effect of a beauty product as opposed to still photos," Nolte said.



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