

## Seeing color traced back to genetic mutations

Why do we see the colors we do? Some of it goes back to the types of color-absorbing pigments that we inherited from bacteria more than a billion years ago. The specific colors we see are, in part, an [artifact](#) of bacterial needs. These ancient color-sensing pigments are tuned to two different wavelengths – shorter ones that correspond to blue and longer ones that go with yellows or reds. All other color vision is an outgrowth of that system, said [neurobiologist](#) Jay Neitz, who works in the ophthalmology department at the University of Washington.

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