



Hot Topics

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XYLITOL CHEWING GUM AIDS ORAL HEALTH

Gum containing xylitol has been found to reduce cavities, kill *S. mutans* bacteria, remineralize teeth and reduce gingival inflammation, even years after it has been used. Xylitol is a sugar substitute with the same sweetness as sucrose and 40% fewer calories. Made from birch trees, corn cobs/stalks and cane bagasse, xylitol is considered a safe food additive.

Extensive research on xylitol has proved it can be exceptionally helpful in promoting good oral health. First developed in Finland during a World War II sugar shortage, xylitol has been shown to reduce caries by up to 85%.¹

The most effective form of xylitol is a pellet gum. The effect of the xylitol is seen even 2 to 3 years after its use has ended.² It appears to have no adverse side effects and is used in a variety of foods, chewing gums and toothpastes. Doses up to 90 grams per day have been deemed safe.³

According to www.xylitolinfo.com, xylitol affects the pH level of the mouth. When carbohydrate or sugars are consumed, pH levels drop below 5.7. Xylitol can restore pH to above 5.7, which slows erosion and allows for remineralization. Saliva flow is also enhanced, which sweeps away harmful materials.

Incorporating xylitol into your daily routine appears to create greater oral health and is a worthwhile addition for many. Ask your dentist for more information.

1. K Sandahl, E Sundling, C Tegnesjo, Xylitol as a caries preventive measure - An introduction to past and present research, Karolinska Institutet, Institute of Odontology; available at: http://www.ki.se/odont/cariologi_endodonti/valfria/KatarinaSandahl_EvaSundling_CeciliaTegnesjo.pdf

2. Isokangas P, Tiekso J et al: Long-term effect of Xylitol chewing gum on dental caries Community Dentistry Oral Epidemiology 17: 1989 pp 200-3.

3. Brin M, Miller ON: The safety of oral Xylitol in: Sugars in Nutrition Sipple HL (ed) Academic Press New York 1974 pp 591-605.
