

Xylitol

Are you doing enough for your oral health?
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FINALLY, a way to help fight tooth decay and reduce cavities.



Delta Dental of Massachusetts

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Xylitol

Discovered in 1891 by a German chemist, Emil Fischer, Xylitol has been used as a sweetener in foods since the 1960s.

Xylitol occurs naturally in many fruits and vegetables and is even produced by the human body during normal metabolism. Produced commercially from plants such as birch and other hard wood trees and fibrous vegetation, Xylitol has the same sweetness, bulk and caloric value as sucrose, and has no unpleasant aftertaste. It quickly dissolves and produces a cooling sensation in the mouth.

Xylitol is used in foods such as chewing gum, mints, gum drops, jellies and chocolate, and in pharmaceuticals and oral health products such as throat lozenges, cough syrups, children's chewable multivitamins, toothpastes and mouthwashes. In the United States, Xylitol is approved as a direct food additive for use in foods for special dietary uses.

Most recently, Xylitol has been proven to reduce tooth decay. It is a good-tasting sugar substitute that has been shown to dramatically reduce cavities. After consuming foods and drinks that are high in sugar, bacteria can grow in your mouth and cause cavities. In fact, there are over 400 known types of bacteria that may find a home in your mouth. Using Xylitol increases the production of saliva in your mouth and works to reduce the acid that causes cavities. It also drains the fuel that bacteria need to wear away the enamel on teeth.

Bacteria can also create plaque, an invisible, sticky film of food residue that constantly forms on your teeth. Unless removed, plaque can form on your gum-line and can lead to gum disease. Gum disease has been associated with health issues as serious as heart disease and diabetes.

We recommend that you:

1. Brush and floss after meals (at least twice a day).
2. Use Xylitol gum or mints after meals, snacks and sodas (at least 3 times a day).

Reduces the Formation of New Cavities

In clinical and field tests, the use of Xylitol between meals was associated with significantly reduced new cavities, even when participants were already practicing good oral hygiene. Results clearly establish that use of Xylitol-sweetened foods provide additional help in the battle against tooth decay. It also inhibits the growth of *S. mutans*, the primary bacterium associated with dental cavities. In one study, children aged 11-12 who consumed 7 to 10 g of Xylitol daily in chewing gum showed a 30 to 60 percent reduction in new cavities compared to the group not chewing the gum.

Benefits of Xylitol

- No Unpleasant Aftertaste
- Helps Reduce the Development of Dental Cavities (Decay)
- Reduces Plaque Formation
- Increases Salivary Flow to Aid in the Repair of Damaged Tooth Enamel
- Acceptable for Non-Insulin-Dependent Diabetics

Reduces Plaque Growth

Recent studies at the Dental Schools of Michigan and Indiana Universities have tested the effect of Xylitol/Sorbitol blends in chewing gum and mints on plaque. They showed a significant decrease in plaque accumulation.

