

Xylitol – Yes Chewing Gum can be a good thing



Some of the most exciting news in dentistry today is the existence of a new sweetener that can fight the decay-causing bacteria that causes dental decay. Some of us have to look closely or put on glasses to read the tiny print but it may be worth the effort to include Xylitol sweetened chewing gum in your family's routine. In a four-year study conducted in Belize, over 1,200 students were given different unsweetened gums to chew. One group was not given gum. All the gum-chewing groups developed less decay with the group chewing gum sweetened with only Xylitol displaying positive results statistically significant of the other groups. Other studies have compared the acid level in the mouth before and after chewing Xylitol gum. Cavities in teeth are created by long-term acid levels within the mouth. Xylitol gum and candies have been proven to lower the acid level within the mouth and thereby reduce the chance for caries.

A study in Finland has shown that an expectant mother who chews Xylitol gum has a statistically significant lower chance to spread decay causing bacteria to the new child. A 6-year follow-up study in 2001 showed the bacteria level in these children were continued to be statistically lower than the children of mothers who did not chew Xylitol-sweetened gum.

PLEASE NOTE: Recommended doses of Xylitol should not exceed 8 grams. Depending upon the gum it is not recommended to chew more than six times a day.

Smile Healthy Bites will offer information for parents, teachers, and children. Different topics will be addressed, throughout the year. Topics of interest are welcome. Please contact the Tooth Fairy at 239-252-8231.