

## **Chewing gum, chew or not to chew?**

**Author: Tujicov Alexei**  
**Ling. cons.: A. Jechiu**

*We like to chew gum because it tastes great and freshens our breath, but a lot of us don't know how it is made, what benefits and disadvantages it has. Should we use chewing gum or not? These are some pieces of information that will help you to make a choice.*

Chewing gum is a sweetened, flavored confection composed primarily of latex, both natural and artificial. Used as a snack, gum has no nutritive value[1]. Nowadays chewing gum is available in a wide variety of flavors such as mint, wintergreen, cinnamon and various types of fruits. There is no standard type of gum, as it can be formed in many different shapes and sizes. Some examples include: chiclet, balls, stick, dragee, bubblegum [2].

All recipes for chewing gum manufactured today share the same main ingredients: a gum base, sweeteners, primarily sugar and corn syrup, and flavorings. Some also contain softeners, such as glycerin and vegetable oil.

After raw ingredients are approved for quality, the production stages begin. The making of gum begins by melting and purifying the gum base, which comes from small round balls. The melted base is poured into a mixer, sweeteners and flavors are added and then all of this are slowly mixed. From the mixers, a large "loaf" of gum is sent through a series of rollers that form it into a thin, wide ribbon. At the end of the rolling process, the continuous ribbon of gum is then cut into a pattern for sticks or small rectangular gum centers. The scored gum is then moved to a temperature-controlled environment to cool and ensure the finished gum will have the right consistency and stay fresh on store shelves. After cooling and tempering, operators break the sheets of sticks up into sections and feed them into the wrapping machine. In one continuous process, the wrapping machine

receives and wraps the sticks, applies the outer wrapper, and seals the end of the package.

Some studies show that chewing gum can prevent from binge eating. When you chew, jaw muscles get stronger. Some gums have ingredients that improve your dental health. Muscular action of chewing gum helps to concentrate, to ease tension and to refresh the breath.

On the other hand chewing gum has many ingredients, which are not good for you in the long term of chewing, like aspartame and other sweeteners that are known carcinogens (cancer causing). If gum has sugar in it, it can cause cavities. Chewing gum is hard to get out of hair, clothing and carpets [3].

Gum chewing is an individual choice. If you chew gum, it is strongly recommended to chew a sugarless gum. It is a good idea to brush your teeth, or at least rinse your mouth with water after chewing gum. If you are susceptible to decay, gum containing Xylitol may have some benefit for you.

### **Bibliography:**

1. Hendrickson, Robert. The Great American Chewing Gum Book. Chilton Book Company, 1976 p.112-135.
2. Lasky, Michael S. The Complete Junk Food Book. McGraw-Hill, 1977, p. 50-64.
3. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chewing\\_gum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chewing_gum)