

Chewing sugar-free gum could help reduce tooth decay, a new review finds

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A systematic review by King's College London has found some evidence that chewing sugar-free gum could help to reduce the further development of dental caries (cavities) in adults and children.

Published today in the *Journal of Dental Research: Clinical & Translational Research*, the review found some evidence that chewing sugar-free gum can reduce the advancement of [dental caries](#), and could be used as a viable preventative agent, in comparison to non-chewing control methods such as [oral health education](#) and supervising toothbrushing programmes alone.

It included analysis of studies published over the last 50 years, identifying 12 which explored the impact and intervention outcome of chewing sugar-free gum on oral health conditions, and in particular, dental caries on adults and children.

Sugar-free gum was found to reduce caries increment, giving it a preventative factor of 28%.

"There is a considerable degree of variability in the effect from the published data and the trials included were generally of moderate quality", explains lead author Professor Avijit Banerjee, Professor of Cariology & Operative Dentistry at King's College London.

"However, we felt there was a definite need to update and refresh existing knowledge about sugar-free gum and its effect on dental caries and oral health. We are planning further research to determine the acceptability and feasibility of using this method in [public health](#)."

In recent years, chewing sugar-free gum has emerged as a possible supplement to existing prevention strategies in stopping the development of dental caries.

"Both the stimulation of saliva which can act as a [natural barrier](#) to protect teeth, and the mechanical plaque control that results from the act of chewing, can contribute to the prevention of dental caries. Sugar-free gum can also act as a carrier for antibacterial ingredients including xylitol and sorbitol. No recent conclusive evidence existed prior to this review that showed the relationship between slowing the development of caries and chewing sugar-free gum," added Professor Banerjee.

Provided by King's College London

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