



Filling You In

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A MOUTHFUL OF HEALTH WITH XYLITOL

Most people like sweet treats. Artificial sweeteners are sometimes recommended in an effort to avoid sugar, but not everyone is comfortable with the idea of chemically-produced sweeteners. Xylitol is a *natural* sugar substitute that tastes like sugar but has about a third fewer calories. It's an excellent sugar substitute for diabetics, having been used as a sweetener since the 1960's. Recently scientists have discovered that xylitol can actually contribute to good dental health with the regular use of gum, mints, and toothpaste that have been sweetened with it.

Chewing gum increases saliva which can wash away food particles. When you can't brush after a meal, chewing sugarless gum sweetened with xylitol can actually suppress the growth of cavity-producing bacteria. These bacteria need sugar to grow -- while acid-causing bacteria feed on sugar and carbs, they cannot rely on xylitol to reproduce. Continued use of xylitol not only inhibits the growth of these organisms but also reduces the amount of bacteria and the formation of dental plaque over time.

In order for xylitol to be effective, it must come in contact with your teeth several times a day for at least six months. The amount of xylitol needed to reduce dental plaque varies according to each study, but in general, it takes about 6-10 grams of xylitol to have an anti-cavity effect. It's recommended that you use xylitol products three to five times per day for up to a year to get results. Some studies show that a long-term xylitol regimen continues to prevent cavities even after the xylitol is discontinued. Xylitol can help eliminate bad breath and remineralize tooth enamel. Research also shows that chewing xylitol gum reduces the incidence of ear infections in small children.

Until recently, most xylitol-containing products could only be found online, but commercial products are starting to catch on. Consumers can find Altoids chewing gum in cinnamon or peppermint, Ice Breakers ICE CUBES gum, Trident with xylitol and Trident Xtra Care gum, as well as Crest MultiCare toothpaste in fresh or cool mint flavors at their local stores. While most products contain 1-2 grams of xylitol per serving, you should check the label to balance your intake. Xylitol is approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

For the convenience of our patients, our office offers Trident Xtra Care gum and individual xylitol *natural* sugar packets. Samples are available and we offer both items for sale at a nominal cost.

It may sound like gaining the benefits of xylitol takes a long time, but for most people chewing gum or mints isn't much of a chore. Xylitol is a great sugar substitute for children who are prone to cavities as well as those who have a difficult time taking care of their teeth, including seniors and special needs patients.

ANNOUNCING... DR. DIAMOND'S DENTAL BLOG

Visit our website: www.MyDiamondDental.Com
Click on "Our Staff". Then click on "Dr. Diamond's Dental Blog".

Dr. Diamond tries to learn something new everyday. He plans to share interesting dental-related news, as well as occasional non-dental news, from the information that crosses his desk.

Check out "Dr. Diamond's Dental Blog" today!

CAFFEINE CAUTION!

Energy drinks, advertised for their "keep you going" properties, represent a sneaky threat to our children and adolescents. They are not subject to FDA restrictions and manufacturers have a relatively free hand with the use of herbal supplements and stimulants. They can contain up to 5 times the caffeine of an 8 oz. regular soda, as in the drink SoBe No Fear, which contains 174 mg of caffeine. A 16 oz. energy drink increases the intake and impact of caffeine.

