

Did You Know?

## Gum Chewing Can Help Prevent Ear Infections!

The Benefits of Gum Chewing:

(Especially with gum containing Xylitol)

While gum chewing is often used to freshen breath and aid in clearing away food debris after eating, the introduction of **xylitol** as a natural gum sweetener has brought several additional benefits.



Xylitol, which is naturally found in the fibers of birch trees and many fruits and vegetables, is widely used as a sugar substitute. In sugar-free chewing gum, xylitol is very "tooth friendly" as it helps to counteract the effect of the plaque acids that are created by bacteria in the mouth after we eat. The acidic environment fosters demineralization of tooth surfaces and hastens decay leading to cavities, while xylitol attracts then "starves" the harmful micro-organisms, and allows the mouth to remineralize damaged teeth more easily and avoid decay.

Since xylitol is low-calorie, is absorbed more slowly than sugar, and has a very low glycemic index of 13, it is advertised as "safe for diabetics and individuals with hyperglycemia."

And yes, studies have shown that chewing gum that contains xylitol can help prevent ear infections. While the natural act of chewing and swallowing helps with the disposal of earwax and clearing the middle-ear, the presence of xylitol in the system helps to prevent the growth of bacteria in the eustachian tubes which connect the nose and ear.

So chew away, but remember that regular brushing and flossing are still a required component to your daily regimen.

At [Proud Smiles](#) we believe that by working with you to achieve maximum oral health, you will also experience better over-all health and wellbeing.

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**Yours in Dental and Oral Health,**

**Dr. Brenda Paulen**

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