

Is chewing gum bad for you?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Chewing gum is neither a health food nor a poison. Whether it is good or bad for you depends on which gum, how much, and what you do with it at the end.

The good

- **Teeth.** Chewing sugar free gum after meals gets saliva flowing, which washes away food and bacteria. The American Dental Association says 20 minutes of chewing after a meal helps prevent tooth decay. See [is chewing gum good for your teeth?](#)
- **Breath.** Gum freshens breath both with flavour and by getting saliva moving.
- **Dry mouth.** The extra saliva can help people who suffer from a dry mouth.
- **Recovery after surgery.** Studies have found that patients who chewed gum several times a day after bowel surgery got their gut working again sooner. Chewing is thought to work as a kind of sham feeding, getting the digestive system going.
- **Heartburn.** Some research suggests chewing gum may help with acid reflux, because the extra saliva swallowed helps neutralise acid in the gullet.

The bad

- **Sugar.** Gum sweetened with sugar feeds the bacteria that cause tooth decay.
- **Too much sweetener.** Sugar free gums use sugar alcohols such as sorbitol and maltitol. These are not fully absorbed in the small intestine, so eating a lot of them can cause bloating, wind and diarrhoea. That is why some sugar free products carry a warning that eating too much may have a laxative effect.
- **Stomach acid.** Chewing gum makes the stomach release acid and digestive juices, and it has sometimes been suggested that this may contribute to stomach ulcers.
- **Swallowing.** An occasional swallowed piece passes through. But young children who swallow a lot of gum often can, rarely, develop a blockage. See [what happens if you swallow chewing gum](#).

Still being studied

Most modern gum is made with a synthetic gum base, and research has found that chewing gum releases tiny plastic particles into saliva, which are then swallowed. What that means for health is still being investigated. See [is chewing gum made of plastic?](#)

The verdict

For most adults, chewing sugar free gum in moderation is fine and may even be good for your teeth. Go easy on the amount, choose sugar free, keep it away from young children and dogs, and always put it in the bin when you have finished.

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