

Pectin sweets explained

From the sweeties.net wiki

Pectin is a natural gelling agent found in the cell walls of plants. Commercial pectin is made mostly from dried citrus peel and from apple pulp left over from juice making, and it has the E number E440: see [what is pectin?](#)

How pectin sets a sweet

There are two main kinds of pectin, and they set in different ways:

- **High methoxyl pectin** forms a gel when there is a lot of sugar, above about 60 per cent soluble solids, and the mixture is acidic, with a pH of about 2.8 to 3.6. The sugar binds the water, forcing the pectin chains together into a three dimensional net. This is the kind used in traditional jam making, and it can be used in confectionery.
- **Low methoxyl pectin** sets with the help of calcium, and can work with much less sugar, from about 10 to 70 per cent soluble solids, over a wider range of acidity.

Makers can choose a pectin to suit the job, from jams and jellies to higher sugar confectionery jellies. Sugar and acid also speed up the setting.

Which sweets use pectin

Pectin is one of the gelling agents, along with starch and agar, used in place of gelatine to make jelly sweets suitable for vegetarians and vegans. One well known switch is Percy Pigs. Marks and Spencer's pig shaped sweets originally contained pork gelatine, and became gelatine free in May 2019, using pectin. Other sweets have dropped gelatine too: Nestlé announced in 2020 that Rowntree's Fruit Pastilles would become vegan friendly: see [what sweets are vegan in the UK?](#)

Pectin or gelatine?

Pectin is plant based, and the high methoxyl kind needs sugar and acid to set, which suits fruity, sweet jellies. Gelatine is an animal protein: see [gelatine in sweets explained](#) Some sweets use more than one gelling agent, such as gummies made with both gelatine and starch, so the ingredients list is the only way to know.

Diet and allergens

Pectin itself comes from fruit, so it suits vegetarians and vegans, but a pectin sweet can still contain other animal ingredients, such as beeswax or carmine: see [a guide to vegan sweets](#)

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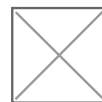
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