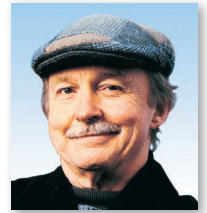


Side Effects of Chewing Gum

By Dr. Joseph Mercola



Bill Wolfe DDS

In the US, 59 percent of people chew gum as a snack simply because they like the flavor or the distraction it provides. However, if you're a regular gum chewer, there's compelling evidence that this is one habit you're better off without. Before you reach for another stick of gum, consider these rather disturbing side effects that gum chewing can cause:

- 1 An Increase Your Junk-Food Intake:** Chewing gum may reduce your motivation to eat, however gum chewers' meals end up being less nutritious, as gum chewers are less likely to eat fruit and instead eat junk food like potato chips and candy. This is likely because the minty flavor in the gum makes fruits and vegetables taste bitter.
- 2 TMJ (Temporomandibular Joint Disorder) in Your Jaw:** Chewing gum can cause jaw muscle imbalance (if you chew on one side more than the other) and even TMJ or *temporomandibular joint disorder* in your jaw. Anytime you overuse a certain set of muscles, it can lead to contracted muscles and related pain, including headaches, earaches, and toothaches over time.
- 3 Gastrointestinal Problems:** Chewing gum causes you to swallow excess air, which can contribute to abdominal pain

and bloating. Further, when you chew gum you send your body physical signals that food is about to enter your body. The enzymes and acids that are activated when you chew gum are therefore released, but without the food they're intended to digest—can create an overproduction of stomach acid, creating gastrointestinal symptoms.

- 4 Tooth Damage—Even from Sugar-Free Gum:** If your chewing gum contains sugar, you're essentially "bathing" your teeth in sugar, which can contribute to tooth decay. Even if you chew sugar-free gum, there are still risks to your teeth because sugar-free gum often contains acidic flavorings and preservatives that may in fact lead to dental erosion.
- 5 Release Mercury From Your Fillings:** If you have mercury/silver fillings, you should know that chewing gum may cause mercury vapor to release from the fillings into your body. "... chewing gum has been shown to increase the release rate of mercury vapor from dental amalgam fillings... The impact of excessive chewing on mercury levels was considerable." Every time you chew, mercury vapor is released, which is inhaled, absorbed, and ingested, which is particularly problematic for those with mercury fillings.

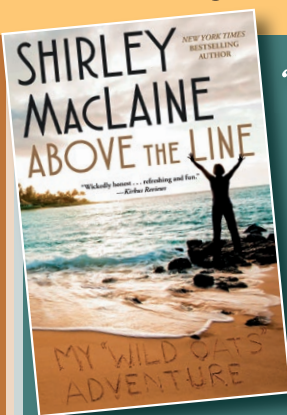
Most Chewing Gum Contains Artificial Sweeteners: Chewing gum is not actually swallowed, but the ingredients, many of which are potentially dangerous, do get absorbed by your body, bypassing the digestive system that would ordinarily help to filter some of the toxins. Even non-sugar-free brands may contain some sort of artificial sweetener as aspartame. Aspartame is metabolized into both wood alcohol (a poison) and formaldehyde (which is a carcinogen used as embalming fluid and is not eliminated from your body through the normal waste filtering done by your liver and kidneys). It's been linked to birth defects, cancers, brain tumors, and weight gain. Also, artificial sweeteners can cause distortions in your biochemistry that may actually make you gain weight.

Chewing Gum Ingredients to Avoid: Artificial sweeteners are only one reason to avoid chewing gum. Most brands also contain additional chemical ingredients that do not belong in your body:

- **BHT** has been linked to organ system toxicity, including kidney and liver damage, hyperactivity in children, and may be carcinogenic.
- **Calcium Casein Peptone** is used as a whitening agent or texturizer and is a well-recognized trigger of autoimmunity.
- **Gum Base** is a petroleum-derived paraffin wax, polyvinyl acetate (carpenter's glue) and talc, all of which are linked to cancer.
- **Titanium Dioxide** is used as a whitening agent in chewing gum, but it's been linked to autoimmune disorders, asthma, and Crohn's disease and is potentially carcinogenic.

From its questionable ingredients to its impact on your teeth and digestion, chewing gum belongs in the trash—not in your mouth.

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