

# Cavity Fighting Xylitol Gum

## What Is Xylitol

Xylitol, a sugar alcohol, is a sugar substitute with a sweetness equal to sugar  
Xylitol is not metabolized by bacteria into acid, yet still stimulates saliva flow, protecting teeth  
Xylitol has been shown to prevent bacteria transmission from mother to child  
Xylitol has been shown to reduce or prevent cavities in children

## Basic Dental Facts

Dental Caries (cavities) is an infectious and transmissible disease  
There are many “good” and “bad” bacteria in mouths  
The “bad” bacteria (primarily Mutans Streptococci) feed on sugars and carbohydrates in your diet, producing acid by-products, which erode teeth causing cavities  
The major source from which infants acquire S. mutans is their mother  
Early colonization by strep mutans is a major risk factor for future cavities  
The best way to reduce or eliminate cavities is to have fewer “bad” bacteria  
To get fewer bacteria, prevent the original infection (transmission), feed the bacteria less (diet), brush and floss them away faster than they can multiply (hygiene)

## What the research says about Xylitol

### *Finnish Mother-Child Study (2000)*

- Established that routine consumption of Xylitol gum reduced the transmission of S. mutans from mother to child, which had a long-term protective effect
- Mothers with high S. mutans levels were recruited to chew Xylitol gum 2-3 times a day from 3-24 months after the child was born. Control group received Fluoride every 6 months
- Only 9 % of the children had detectable S. mutans levels in the gum chewing group
- 48% of the control group had detectable S. mutans levels at 24 months
- 3 years later (at 5 yrs old), these children had a 70% cavity reduction over control group
- ❖ NONE OF THESE CHILDREN RECEIVED ANY XYLITOL
- ❖ The moms had not used Xylitol gum for 3 years!

### *Washington State University Study (1999)*

- Children, average 6 years old, chewed Xylitol gum 3x/day for 2 years
- 5 years later (13 yr. olds) these children had 59% reduced cavity risk
- Permanent teeth that erupted after 1 year of gum chewing or after the two-year chewing period ended showed a risk reduction of 93%
- Teeth that erupted before the gum chewing started had NO risk reduction
- Xylitol gum reduces plaque adhesion to teeth, making it easily removed by brushing and saliva
- Xylitol even reduces ear infections by 40% when used 4-5 times/day

## What we recommend when using Xylitol

Expectant and new mothers begin chewing Xylitol gum as early as the 2nd trimester  
Toddlers and young children begin chewing Xylitol gum by age 4 or 5  
Chew Xylitol gum for 5 min, 3 times/day for at least 2 years for max benefit.