

NUTRITION



F A C T S H E E T

The Benefits of Chewing Gum

Chewing gum was named the number one snack choice by Americans in 2005. Most consumers know that chewing sugarfree gum can help prevent tooth decay and freshen breath. Now, new research is indicating that chewing gum may be used as a tool to help manage weight, increase focus, alertness and concentration, and help relieve “life’s everyday stresses.”

Help Manage Your Weight

Chewing gum is portable, inexpensive and low in calories. At 5 to 10 calories per serving, chewing gum is a great way to avoid munching and to reduce calorie intake.

- Chewing gum may aid appetite control. An initial study published in *Appetite* in 2007 found that chewing gum before an afternoon snack can help reduce hunger and decrease calorie intake. In the study, adults who chewed gum for 15 minutes at one hour intervals over a three-hour period before an afternoon snack ate 36 calories less of the snack than adults who did not chew gum. It didn’t matter if they chewed regular or sugarfree chewing gum. Both helped the study subjects eat less. More research is necessary to explore the role of chewing gum in appetite control as a strategy for weight management.
- Chewing gum can also be a low-calorie substitute for high-calorie snacks. For example, if you chew two sticks of gum at 20 calories instead of eating 1 to 2 chocolate chip cookies at 140 calories, you can save 120 calories.
- Sugarfree chewing gum counts as a “free” food in weight management food exchange lists.

In the spirit of making small lifestyle changes that can make a difference in the long run, chewing gum can be a practical tool to help avoid “mindless munching” and manage weight.

Help Improve Focus and Relieve Stress

Looking for simple ways to increase focus or relieve tension? Chewing gum may offer an easy solution. Research has shown that chewing gum may help improve alertness and concentration and help relieve daily stresses like driving in traffic or waiting in line.

- Many athletes and coaches chew gum to “stay in the game.” And, some teachers have reversed school policies and encouraged students to chew gum during tests to help increase their alertness and concentration.
- Psychiatrists and psychologists suggest two of the reasons people chew gum are to relieve boredom and reduce tension. Chewing gum may also help people release nervous energy and provide an outlet for frustration and irritation.

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The Benefits of Chewing Gum (continued)

- A study published in *Appetite* in 2002 showed that chewing gum appeared to improve people's ability to learn, retain, and retrieve information.
- Research shows that chewing gum increases blood flow to the brain by 25 percent. There is more work to be done to understand how it may impact memory and learning.

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Did You Know?

Since World War I, the U.S. Armed Forces have supplied chewing gum to military personnel in field and combat rations to help increase alertness, ease tension and improve oral health.

Help Improve Oral Health

In addition to freshening breath, chewing gum increases saliva, which is one of the most powerful defense mechanisms in the body. Chewing sugarfree gum can deliver many oral health benefits including helping to:

- Reduce plaque
- Reduce cavities
- Remineralize enamel to strengthen teeth
- Reduce and prevent stains

Emerging science suggests that there may be a link between a "healthy mouth" and a "healthy body." In fact, scientists are exploring how reducing unhealthy bacteria in the mouth may affect the overall health of the body.

TIPS FOR MANAGING YOUR WEIGHT WITH CHEWING GUM

- Pop a piece of gum in your mouth to signal the end of a meal.
- Chew gum between meals when you are feeling the urge for high-calorie snacks.
- Does stress trigger you to eat too much? Try chewing gum to help relieve stress and avoid "mindless munching."
- Chew gum while cooking to keep from nibbling during meal preparation.

These tips are small lifestyle changes that can help manage calorie intake and fit into a busy schedule.

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Did You Know?

Scientists at the Mayo Clinic have observed that chewing gum can burn about 11 calories per hour.

For a referral to a registered dietitian and for additional food and nutrition information visit
WWW.EATRIGHT.ORG

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Registered Dietitians are the experts when it comes to helping people eat well and stay healthy. An RD has the knowledge and expertise to develop an eating plan to meet the needs of all individuals.

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