

## Dental erosion – current perspectives for general practice

### Précis:

Dental erosion and tooth wear pose significant challenges to the dental practitioner today.

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## Sugar tax and obesity

### Précis:

A report from two separate workshops on the merits or otherwise of imposing a so-called 'sugar tax' as a response to rising levels of obesity, concluding with a commentary.

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## The oral health benefits of chewing gum

### Précis

This paper provides an overview of the scientific and clinical support for the dental benefits of sugar-free gum as an adjunct to regular daily oral care.

### Abstract

The use of sugar-free gum provides a proven anti-caries benefit, but other oral health effects are less clearly elucidated. Chewing sugar-free chewing gum promotes a strong flow of stimulated saliva, which helps to provide a number of dental benefits: first, the higher flow rate promotes more rapid oral clearance of sugars; second, the high pH and buffering capacity of the stimulated saliva help to neutralise plaque pH after a sugar challenge; and, lastly, studies have shown enhanced remineralisation of early caries-like lesions and ultimately prospective clinical trials have shown reduced caries incidence in children chewing sugar-free gum. This paper reviews the scientific evidence for these functional claims and discusses other benefits, including plaque and extrinsic stain reduction, along with the possibility of adding specific active agents, including fluoride, antimicrobials, urea and calcium phosphates, to enhance these inherent effects. The evidence for a specific effect of xylitol as a caries-therapeutic agent is also discussed. In conclusion, it is asserted that chewing gum has a place as an additional mode of dental disease prevention to be used in conjunction with the more traditional preventive methods.

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