

New Chewing Gum Can Prevent Tooth Decay

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A new chewing gum containing good bacteria which prevent harmful bacteria from destroying our teeth has been developed by scientists working for BASF GmbH and OrganoBalance GmbH. There is also a good chance good bacteria could be added to deodorants to eliminate BO (body odour).

The company says that as well as chewing gum to protect teeth, it is looking into developing toothpastes and mouthwashes which contain this friendly bacteria.

The bacteria is called Lactobacillus, and is usually found in yoghurt. The scientists discovered a new strain, called L. anti-caries.

Streptococcus mutans (S. mutans), a harmful type of bacteria, sticks to the surface of the teeth and converts sugar into acids which eat away at the enamel. L. anti-caries makes S. mutans clump together so that it cannot stick to your teeth.

BASF researchers say tests have shown their chewing gum managed to reduce S. mutans levels in the mouth to one-fiftieth of what they were. The company hopes to have the first oral hygiene products containing L. anti-caries on the market next year. Stefan Marcinowski, Executive Director of Research, BASF, did not say whether the products would first appear as chewing gums, toothpastes or mouthwashes.

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