

### news

## Bacteria for healthy teeth

Source: scenta

**A new chewing gum containing ‘good bacteria’ has been developed to fight tooth decay.**



Good bacteria destroy the bad bacteria that cause teeth corrosion.

The gum, one of several by German company BASF, uses the *Lactobacillus* bacteria, commonly found in live yogurt.

BASF discovered and uses a new strain of *Lactobacillus* called *L. anti-caries*, which binds to *Streptococcus mutans* – the tooth decay inducing bad bacteria.

*S. mutans* sticks to the surface of teeth, where it produces an aggressive acid that breaks down the enamel.

The friendly bacteria in the gum will cause *S. mutans* to attach to each other, and not onto the tooth surface.

Tests reveal that the chewing gum can reduce the amount of bacteria in the mouth fifty times.

### Lactobacillus products developed for many uses

Stefan Marcinowski, executive director of research at BASF, said that a *Lactobacillus* product is due to hit the supermarkets in 2007, but would not confirm whether it is the chewing gum.

Marcinowski said that the chewing gum “has been tested on large numbers of people and demonstrated the ability to significantly reduce bacterial levels.”

A new range of toothpastes and mouthwashes using *Lactobacillus anti-caries* are also in the making.

Chewing gums containing the artificial sweetener xylitol, which has antimicrobial properties, have also been shown to suppress the bacteria that fight tooth decay.

Other uses of *Lactobacillus* could be in anti-perspirants.

BASF are looking into producing a deodorant based on *L. aladoris*, which can inhibit odour-producing bacteria

in the armpit.

Similarly, tests have shown another strain, *L. ala-odoris*, can reduce odour formation in feet.

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