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New gum to prevent tooth decay

by Gunika Khurana - August 22, 2006 - 0 comments

Tooth decay may be a worry for most of us, but not now as scientists have made a chewing gum that contains friendly bacteria, which will help prevent decay.

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The German chemical company BASF developed the gum containing lactobacillus bacteria that will fight the bugs which rot teeth. The harmful effect that the mouth bacteria cause by sticking and attacking the teeth will be combated by chewing the new gum developed.

BASF said that Lactobacillus containing tooth pastes and mouth washes are also in the pipeline and will be soon available in the market. Not only this, there is a chance that the bacteria will be added to deodorants to eliminate body odour as well.

Friendly bacteria, normally found in live yoghurt, are already reputed to be good for treating bowel conditions.

Streptococcus mutans, the bacterium responsible for dental cavities, causes the sugar to convert into belligerent acids, which breaks down the enamel.

Lactobacillus prevents mutans from depositing in the teeth and making clumps and hence stops it from bonding with the teeth.

The BASF scientists claim that the gum has been tested on large numbers of people and has the ability to significantly reduce bacterial levels. Dr Andreas Reindl of BASF said that the effectiveness of the good bacteria has been proven and informed that the first oral hygiene products containing lactobacilli are scheduled to appear in 2007.

Dentists advise that the best way to keep your teeth in good condition is to ensure that you clean them regularly to get rid of any plaque build up. A regular dental check up is also important.

Dr Gordon Watkins, a member of the British Dental Association's health and science committee warned that the use of the chewing gum will not remove the need to brush teeth as their action is targeted against just one bacterium.

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(filed under: Health)
Write to author: Gunika Khurana

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