

A Chewing Gum That Helps in Fighting Tooth Decay

A new chewing gum that helps in fighting tooth decay has been developed by BASF, a German company, and could be in the shops as early as next year. The company claims its product can reduce the amount of harmful bacteria in the mouth by 50 times. The product was developed in collaboration with another German company OrganoBalance.

The gum helps in fighting tooth decay by preventing the *Streptococcus mutans* (bacteria involved in tooth decay) from adhering to the tooth. The gum contains a new strain of lactobacillus named *lactobacillus anti-caries*, which causes the *Streptococcus mutans* bacteria to clump together so they cannot adhere on to teeth. Lactobacillus is a microbe that is naturally found in yoghurt and buttermilk.

Executive director at BASF, Stefan Marcinowski, said the product "has been tested on large numbers of people and demonstrated the ability to significantly reduce bacterial levels." He added, "The bacterium is well established and safe."

The company is also developing deodorants using other lactobacillus strains, which can stop the odor-producing bacteria in the armpit.

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