

Xylitol: How It Helps Prevent Tooth Decay

What is Xylitol?

- A naturally occurring carbohydrate that looks and tastes just like regular table sugar
- A natural sweetener found in low concentrations in a range of fruits and vegetables, that is extracted from fibrous plant materials such as corn or trees
- It is not foreign — our body naturally produces 5–10 grams of xylitol per day

How Does Xylitol Reduce the Risk of Tooth Decay?

- Unlike sugar, bacteria that cause cavities cannot use xylitol as an energy source. Therefore, it stops bacterial growth and reproduction, both of which release acidic by-products that are harmful to the tooth.
- Chewing xylitol products helps bring saliva to the mouth, which acts as a natural cleanser, and xylitol increases salivary pH, reversing an acidic environment that harms your tooth.
- When introduced to children during tooth eruption, xylitol enhances early mineralization of teeth and inhibits the initial growth of decay-causing bacteria. Studies have also shown that bacterial transmission from parents to newborns is reduced when mothers use xylitol regularly.

Xylitol Products

- For xylitol to be at decay-preventing levels, it must be listed as the first ingredient.
- Avoid any products that may contain counterproductive ingredients, such as citric acid used for flavouring or other sweeteners (such as sorbitol, manitol).
- We recommend the following brands, which can be found at Goodness Me retail locations:
 1. SPRY
 2. PUR
 3. Xyla

Xylitol Use

- Xylitol gums or mints used 3–5 times daily, not exceeding a total intake of 5 grams, are optimal for dental benefits.
 - Example: Each piece of PUR gum has 1 gram of xylitol, therefore, you will need to chew 5 pieces throughout the day for a total of 5 grams.
- Frequency and duration of exposure is important:
 1. Gum should be chewed for 5 minutes.
 2. Mints should be allowed to dissolve.