4175 Silverton Rd NE
Salem, OR 97305
503-588-7800

# Xylitol — A New Sweetener
# What it Can Do for You

**What is it?**

Xylitol is a natural carbohydrate sweetener found in virtually all fruits and vegetables. Your body manufactures it daily in small amounts. It's a polyol or multi carbon molecule, and it chemically resembles alcohol and sugar without being either. It has 5 carbon atoms instead of 6 like sugar, sorbitol & mannitol. So it won't let tooth decay and sinus bacteria grow. Xylitol is approved by the FDA as a food additive in unlimited amounts.

It's was discovered over 100 years ago, and was used during World War II in Finland due to sugar shortages. Research on xylitol as a preventative for cavities has been going on for 30+ years. Dental associations in Finland, Norway, Sweden, England, Ireland, Estonia, and The Netherlands recognize it as a decay preventative. Xylitol chewing gum was introduced in 1975 in Finland and the United States. Recently, more suppliers have begun producing Xylitol products in the U.S. Xylitol is available from some dentists, at health food stores, and online. Since the 1970's, many studies have been done showing the benefits of xylitol for fighting cavities as well as upper respiratory diseases.

**Prevent Tooth Decay**

Xylitol's chemical structure keeps harmful bacteria from attaching to surfaces and multiplying. It starves those bacteria because they can't metabolize Xylitol -- The exact opposite reaction as that of table sugar.

**For Diabetics**

Xylitol keeps sugar levels low because it is slowly & steadily absorbed by the body reducing the risk of overeating and suppressing appetite. It is safe for diabetes or hypoglycemia patients.

| **Sweetener** | **Glycemic Index (How much it raises blood sugar)** |
|---|---|
| Glucose | 100 |
| Table sugar (sucrose) | 68 |
| High fructose corn syrup | 62 |
| Honey | 55 |
| Fructose | 19 |
| Xylitol | 7 |

**Weight Watchers**

Xylitol has 40% fewer calories than sugar. Americans get 20% of our calories from sugar. It can be used in cooking and baking. It doesn't have an aftertaste. It is used by the body slowly over a longer period of time, keeping appetite in check.

A 2200 calorie diet should include no more than 12 teaspoons of sugar (which equals 4 tablespoons or ¼ cup) per day for 192 calories. The average U.S. diet averages 31 teaspoons of extra sugar, or over ½ a cup per day. Xylitol can help bring that down to a lower range. It can be substituted for sugar except in hard candy, yeast-raised products, and lemonade and other cold drinks. Because large amounts of xylitol can cause diarrhea for some people, using it as a sweetener for lemonade and the like is not recommended.

It may take an adjustment period of several weeks for the laxative effect of xylitol to wear off, so it should be introduced as a sugar substitute over a period of up to 6 weeks So adjusting to it depends on your own body.

**Available Xylitol Products**

Xylitol is available in gum, mints, nasal spray, mouth rinse, toothpaste, candy, dry mouth spray. The crystals are available as a sugar substitute. Xylitol can be substituted for sugar in many recipes for jams, baking, and cooking Look for recipes in *Sweeten Your Life the Xylitol Way* by Karen Edwards.

**Upper Respiratory Benefits for Sinus & Earache Sufferers**

Xylitol's chemical structure keeps harmful bacteria from attaching to surfaces and multiplying. It starves those bacteria because they can't metabolize xylitol. Syrup, gum, and nasal spray are three delivery methods for fighting sinus and middle ear infections. Middle ear infections enter the ear from the Eustachian tubes, so changing the environment in you nose and mouth can affect how many germs can travel to other sites in your head.

**How Much Do You Need per Day for Tooth Decay Prevention**

4-8 grams per day, spread over the day inhibit the growth of decay bacteria in your mouth. Sucking on xylitol mints or chewing xylitol gum 3-5 times a day is usually enough to make a change in your mouth. Up to 9 grams per day is suggested for middle ear infections. The World Health Organization indicates no upward limits for humans.

**What's Wrong with Xylitol?**

Too much xylitol can affect your digestion and cause gas & loose stools. Don't pop xylitol mints like gum drops. It can take several weeks for your body to adjust to xylitol in your diet.

Xylitol is perfectly safe for humans, but do not feed products with xylitol to pets. Research has not been done on animals, but ingesting products containing xylitol may cause sickness or death in household pets.

The cost of xylitol as a sugar substitute can be as much as $5 a pound.

**What are the Long-term Effects of Xylitol Use?**

Studies among schoolchildren in Belize showed that those who chewed xylitol gum for two years had a 50% reduction in cavities over a 5-year period. Compared to fluoride, used to harden teeth, mothers using xylitol had improved dental health themselves and their children had up to five times better dental health. Fluoride use by moms had not effect on the children. Changing the environment in your mouth can actually remineralize (harden) your teeth by reducing plaque and exposing them to saliva.

**For further information see:**

*Xylitol, An Amazing Discovery for Health* by Makenin, Jones, Peldyak, published by Woodland Publishing.com

*Xylitol, Dental and Upper Respiratory Health* by Wright and Lenard, published by Dragon Art

xylitol.org