

http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/fact-or-fiction-chewing-gum-takes-seven-years-to-digest/

Informational Write – Entertainment

Here’s What Happens If You Chew Too Much Gum

posted on Aug. 31, 2015, at 12:37 p.m.

Erin La Rosa

BuzzFeed Staff

Look, gum is delicious, fun, and a gift to the world. In the US alone, over $2 billion of gum is sold each year! The total value of the chewing gum industry is over $19 billion. And it isn’t even a new thing. The oldest known piece of gum is over 9,000 years old. But chewing all that gum can’t be good for you… can it? And what bad things can actually happen if you chew too much of it?

Well, for starters, it can cause tooth damage. If your chewing gum contains sugar, you're essentially "bathing" your teeth in sugar while you chew away. This can contribute to tooth decay. Even if you chew sugar-free gum, there are still risks to your teeth because sugar-free gum often contains acidic flavorings and preservatives that may in fact lead to dental erosion, even if it contains cavity-fighting xylitol. Unlike cavities, dental erosion is a process of incremental decalcification, which, over time, literally *dissolves* your teeth.

Not only that, it may also trigger TMJ (*Temporomandibular Joint* Disorder) in your jaw. Chewing gum can cause jaw muscle imbalance (if you chew on one side more than the other) and even TMJ or *temporomandibular joint* disorder in your jaw, which can be a painful chronic condition. Anytime you overuse a certain set of muscles, it can lead to contracted muscles and related pain, including headaches, earaches, and toothaches over time. In fact, recent studies have linked headaches in teens to chewing gum. One study involved 30 daily gum chewers between the ages of six and 19 years. Each suffered from chronic migraine or tension headaches. After quitting gum chewing for one month, 19 of them had their headaches go away completely while another seven had a reduction in headache frequency and severity. Twenty-six of the children then started chewing gum again, only to have their headaches return within days. The researchers believe the headaches may be linked to chewing-gum-induced TMJ, which may cause headaches.

Want more? Chewing gum causes you to swallow excess air, which can contribute to abdominal pain and bloating seen with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Further, when you chew gum you send your body physical signals that food is about to enter your body. The enzymes and acids that are activated when you chew gum are therefore released, but without the food they're intended to digest. This can cause bloating, an overproduction of stomach acid, and can compromise your ability to produce sufficient digestive secretions when you actually do eat food. Some people may also have adverse gastrointestinal symptoms, including diarrhea, from the artificial sweeteners that are commonly found in chewing gum.

Model

When Football Isn’t a Game Anymore

Baseball – the great American pastime. Or maybe not. According to CNSNews.com, more teenagers play soccer in the US than baseball and basketball ranks above that. Outdoor track ranks above them both but American Football looms highest of all. In fact, more boys play football each year than girls and boys in all other sports combined. So you could say it’s a pretty big deal. Mothers and fathers send their boys out onto the field in pads and helmets and feel cozy knowing their kids are safe. But are they? It turns out that football may not be as safe as you think. And some of the risks are downright scary.

One major cause for concern is the number of concussions each year in football. When teenage players, who have weaker neck muscles than their college and pro counterparts, get hit, “It’s the bobblehead effect,” says Jamsid Ghajar, professor of neurosurgery at Stanford University School of Medicine in a *Time* magazine interview. “The whiplashing neck motion causes the jostling of the brain that leads to concussions and worse.” According to NBC News, Alex Pierscionek, 19, of Illinois is the first teenager to file a lawsuit against a high school sports association after receiving multiple concussions during his years playing football. He knew something was wrong when people told him he had run a few more plays after a head-on collision during practice two years ago. He had collapsed and was airlifted off the field, none of which he remembers. He is using his experience to promote policy changes that protect young students and their developing brains.

In addition, the huge amount of force in a typical football hit and tackle can cause temporary or permanent paralysis. KETV reports that in 2012, Isaac Pfeifer from Norfolk Catholic High School was paralyzed from the waist down after a hit to the head during a game against Fort Calhoun. Isaac’s spinal cord was nearly severed. Three years later he is still working to regain his ability to walk and his family is struggling with medical expenses. He has been getting some feeling back in his legs but knows the process will be a long and difficult one. Needless to say, he won’t be looking back on his high school football career with nostalgia.

Unfortunately, there are even more extreme cases in which the player never leaves the field alive. On Halloween night 2013, reports TIME magazine, the Tipton Cardinals of Missouri took the field with Sacred Heart in the Missouri high school playoffs. With seven minutes left to play, defensive back Chad Stover dived to tackle the opposing team’s running back, colliding with the runner’s right thigh. Chad went down, his helmet smacking the ground. Chad seemed alright, though a bit dazed, and even went back in on two occasions. It was there on the field in a huddle that Chad collapsed and never got up again. The official cause of death was blunt-force injury to the cranium. Hours before the game, Chad was hopping around his kitchen with excitement. “I really think we can do it!” he told his mom. He was looking forward to his upcoming birthday and camping trip as well. “This team has the potential. Wouldn’t it be cool, Mom, if it clicked?” His future seemed bright and full of possibility.