

## ADA (American Dental Association) APPROVED

I wanted to do something a little lighter this month—man bites dog myth, discovery of toothpaste, flavorings for your floss, etc. But then I came across another article announcing that the ADA has given its “seal of approval “ to chewing gum.

Not just any chewing gum, however, just the ones made by Wrigley. As pointed out in the article, this did not come via the Nobel Prize committee, although I’m sure Wrigley will reap a nice “prize” from the label. No, they had to pay the ADA to get this seal of approval, almost \$40,000. This sets the bar a little high for those companies that cannot afford to buy the label.

My problem is that the public tends to believe that if the ADA approves of it, it must be the best. In this case, that is not true. The seal of approval should have been given to xylitol, which has been shown in several studies over the last few years that you can lower your caries(decay) rate when a gum containing xylitol is chewed regularly. Any gum containing xylitol will work. I am a little disappointed that the ADA did not make that clear.

But enough of the cynicism, the good news is that chewing the right kind of gum is healthy for your teeth, and eventually we will probably also find it helpful for certain types of periodontal disease as well. So enjoy your gum, just please stop throwing it on the Walgreens sidewalk.

One final note is a clarification of my last article. A dentist from Plainfield challenged that I was one-sided about the “caries detection machine.” I think he was right that the article did seem to imply that any dentist who uses it is bad. That is not what I intended to say. Basically, I wanted to emphasize that technology used improperly is bad—and that happens too often. I am sorry for the incorrect wording and implications, and apologize to any dentists who deserve one. And I did not just say that the ADA is bad!

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