

Chewing gum reduces snack cravings and decreases consumption of sweet snacks

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Men and women who chewed Extra® sugar-free gum three times hourly in the afternoon chose and consumed less snacks and specifically, less sweet snacks than they did when they did not chew gum. They still reached for a variety of snacks provided but the decrease in overall snack intake was significant at 40 calories and sweet snack intake specifically was significantly lowered by 60 calories.

Researchers from the Pennington Biomedical Research Center and Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, La., presented study findings on April 19, 2009 at the Experimental Biology 2009 meeting in New Orleans.

The presentation by Dr. Paula J Geiselman, chief of women's health and eating behavior and smoking cessation at Pennington, was part of the scientific program of the American Society for Nutrition. Earlier studies had found that [gum](#) chewing was associated with lower snack intake, but the study conducted by Dr. Geiselman is the first to examine the macronutrient composition of afternoon snack food choices made by men and women after chewing Extra® sugar-free gum.

The participants, 115 men and women, between the ages of 18 and 54, were all regular gum chewers. They came to the laboratory twice - once for the gum condition and the other for the no gum condition. During each visit, subjects were given sandwiches for lunch, nutrient rich enough to account for one fourth of their recommended daily caloric intake. They remained in the laboratory and for the next three hours,

they either chewed Extra® sugar-free gum for 15 minutes hourly for three hours or did not chew gum.

Participants filled out questionnaires rating their self-perceived levels of hunger, cravings for snacks and energy levels. Three hours after lunch, they were offered a variety of snacks including high sugar foods and high complex carbohydrate foods that contained either high or low fat. Subjects could eat as much as they wanted of any or all snack food categories.

When they chewed gum, on average, they reported significantly decreased feelings of hunger and cravings for something sweet. In addition, the gum chewers felt they maintained energy levels throughout the afternoon and also felt significantly less drowsy at hours two and three before the afternoon snack.

According to Dr. Geiselman, "Overall, this research demonstrates the potential role chewing gum can play in appetite control, reduction of snack cravings and weight management. Even small changes in calories can have an impact in the long term. And, this research supports the role of chewing gum as an easy, practical tool for managing snack, especially sweet snack, intake and cravings.

Source: Federation of American Societies for [Experimental Biology](#) ([news](#) : [web](#))

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