International Chewing Gum Association
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General statement: The International Chewing Gum Association (ICGA) has prepared this document to provide important background and answer common questions. ICGA supports transparency and seeks to ensure that information about chewing gum is accurate, accessible, and consistent with all regulatory requirements.

Question & Answers:

Q1. What are the main ingredients of chewing gum?

The key components of chewing gum are gum base, sugar or non-sugar sweeteners, flavors and various functional additives that come together to deliver the product's unique texture, chewing pleasure and long-lasting taste.

Q2. What are the benefits of chewing gum?

Besides providing chewing pleasure and great taste, chewing gum, especially sugar-free chewing gum, has long been recognized for its ***oral health benefits****. Leading health-related organizations and authorities, including the American Dental Association, the European Food Safety Authority, and the U.K. National Health Service have concluded that sugar free chewing gum* ***reduces cavity risk*** *by stimulating saliva production and neutralizing acids that can cause cavities. In addition, the ingredients in sugar-free gum are not fermentable by the oral bacteria responsible for the development of cavities. And, because saliva contains buffering agents that help neutralize the acids that can cause cavities, higher saliva production stimulated by chewing gum itself can reduce the risk of cavities.*

On top of oral health benefits, emerging science suggests that chewing gum ***may help support focus and concentration****, as well as help address everyday stress.*

Q3. Is chewing gum safe?

Yes. Chewing gum has been safely enjoyed for decades. All ingredients used in chewing gum produced by ICGA members meet food safety requirements established by leading authorities such as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and equivalent bodies worldwide.

Q4. Does chewing gum contain microplastics?

Microplastics are not intentionally added to or used as ingredients in chewing gum. ICGA is aware of preliminary, method development studies that have explored ways to determine whether microplastic type particles may be released during chewing. To date, ICGA is not aware of any

validated studies or methods for detecting or quantifying microplastic particles present in or released from chewing gum.

Q5. Is there research associating chewing gum with microplastics?

Preliminary studies have looked at whether chewing gum may release microplastic-type particles. One pilot study at the University of California, Los Angeles reported that both so-called natural and synthetic gum products released similar levels of particles. Another study conducted at Queen's University Belfast also explored this question. However, these studies were small in scale and carried out using methods that have not been validated, which means the results cannot be considered conclusive. ICGA follows scientific developments closely and welcomes independent research that helps ensure discussions remain based on robust evidence.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), trace levels of microplastics are found across the entire food chain, including in most common food products, and in water and air. In that context, trace amounts may also be expected in chewing gum. Importantly, food safety authorities such as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration have stated that "current scientific evidence does not demonstrate that levels of microplastics or nanoplastics detected in foods pose a risk to human health." Similarly, the WHO has stated that "limited data provide little evidence that [nano- and microplastic particles] have adverse effects in humans."

Q6. Does chewing gum contain plastic?

Chewing gum does not contain intentionally added plastic microbeads or industrial grade plastics (such as those used in ''bicycle tires'' or ''wood glue''). The comparison to plastics used in industrial products is misleading. All ingredients used in chewing gum must be food grade and are subject to safety standards and regulations that are not applicable to industrial products.

Q7. What happens if you accidentally swallow chewing gum?

This happens sometimes, and you have nothing to worry about. Your body cannot digest gum, so it simply passes through your system.

Q8. Why is chewing gum talked about so much?

Chewing gum is part of everyday life, used by millions of people for many years.
Because it is used across different age groups and cultures, it sometimes comes up in conversations about oral hygiene, habits, or food products generally.

Q9. What is gum base?

Gum base is what gives chewing gum its "chew." It can be made from natural or synthetic materials, all of which are food-grade and authorized by leading food safety authorities. Different

recipes provide different textures, ranging from soft gums to bubble gums. Manufacturers develop sophisticated gum base formulas to deliver the unique performance characteristics desired by their consumers.

Q10. What is the difference between "natural" and "synthetic" chewing gum base ingredients?

Among the many gum base ingredients that have been reviewed and authorized around the world are natural plant extracts such as chicle, synthetic polymers, waxes of natural and synthetic origin, and softening ingredients that are derived from plants and then modified. While the gum base in some chewing gum products may contain ingredients of natural origin, these ingredients should not be presumed to provide advantages in terms of safety, sustainability, or degradability and are available only in limited quantities.

Q11. Why are chewing gum manufacturers using synthetic polymers when there are natural alternatives available?

While some brands are developing products with natural gum base ingredients, synthetic ingredients continue to offer benefits such as consistency, long-lasting flavor support and texture. The availability of natural polymers suitable for chewing gum production is very limited, and reformulating chewing gum is a complex process requiring extensive safety and performance testing. Whether a natural ingredient provides advantages in terms of sustainability, degradability, or any other property would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis and can by no means be presumed.

Q12. Why does chewing gum packaging list "gum base" as an ingredient?

Food labelling laws and regulations generally require that ingredients be declared using names that are commonly understood and recognized in the markets where the products are sold. "Gum base" is the widely accepted term that chewing gum manufacturers use in accordance with food labelling laws in the ingredient list for the component of chewing gum that provides its chewable texture. For this reason, it appears on chewing gum labels as the standard designation. Chewing gum base is not unique in this respect. Other categories of food ingredients, such as flavors and vegetable oils, are commonly identified in the ingredients lists on food labels by category names.

Q13. Is information about chewing gum ingredients available to consumers?

Chewing gum ingredients and labels are governed by publicly available standards and regulations. Labelling laws and regulations applicable to all foods, including chewing gum, require that ingredients be listed in a clear and standardized way. "Gum base" is the recognized term for the component that provides gum's chewable texture. At the same time, specific formulations of gum

base are the result of many years of proprietary research and development and represent valuable industrial know-how. As with other food products, the precise composition is therefore safeguarded, while ensuring that consumers are provided the information they need to make informed purchase decisions.

Q14. What is ICGA doing about consumer concerns?

ICGA works to make sure information about chewing gum is clear, legally compliant, and based on science. We do this by:

- *Providing fact-based information to regulators, policymakers, and other authorities to help ensure that public discussions on chewing gum are grounded in science.*
- *Following and welcoming independent, peer-reviewed research on topics such as food safety and microplastics, and sharing relevant findings with its members and stakeholders.*
- *Engaging openly with authorities, scientists, and the public on matters relating to safety, sustainability, and transparency.*