

Gum: not so dumb?

Business



Schools around the country ban gum, but recent studies may help once again give gum a good name. Research has concluded that gum chewing has many health benefits and contributes to a positive learning environment. Given this, bringing gum back into schools should be a no-brainer.

Gum chewing has been proven to increase concentration in students. A study in the United Kingdom discovered that people who chewed gum while memorizing a list of words did 25 percent better than those who were not chewing. In Japan, an experiment with nine participants found that chewing gum boosted blood flow to the brain by up to 40 percent. Increased blood flow means increased oxygen to the brain, and increased oxygen means increased concentration. It makes sense that increased blood flow would be related to enhanced alertness, says nutritionist Gil Leveille. The consistent motion of chewing has also been connected to a more peaceful classroom.

The motion is thought to relieve stress and free students to focus on their schoolwork more efficiently and with less distraction. This is especially true if students are plagued by attention deficit disorder (ADD) or simply have difficulty concentrating. Given the chance, gum could turn out to be a strong asset to the classroom. Gum is not only beneficial to learning, but also helpful in weight management and digestion. Recent studies have shown that chewing gum could help fight obesity in children and teens. And with obesity rates in America higher than they have ever been, this is huge.

After research and experiments, the University of Liverpool concluded that chewing gum can greatly reduce calorie intake. This is thought to be accomplished in two ways: Gum reduces hunger cravings, and keeps one's

mouth occupied. Nobody likes to eat while chewing gum, so unnecessary snacking is reduced. The act of chewing may also aid in digestion by increasing the flow of saliva. When saliva is swallowed, it stops the reflux of acid back into the throat.

Acid reflux in children and teens has grown exponentially in the past few years. It is considered one of the leading causes of esophageal cancer, which is also on the rise in this age group. Anything that could aid in solving this problem could save lives. Gum has great potential to do good. With all these benefits, why do some schools continue to ban it? They claim that gum can degrade school property. Students have been known to stick it under desks and other places when they are done chewing.

Well, if students were allowed to chew gum they would not be fearful of properly disposing of it. Currently students who chew gum do so against the rules, and so must hide the evidence. If students could chew gum without getting in trouble, destruction of school property would probably decrease. So, come on, schools! What are you waiting for? To continue to ban gum in the face of all these benefits is to purposefully ignore its advantages. Gum has much to offer the classroom and our lives.