



LAURENCE H. STONE, D.D.S.
COSMETIC & GENERAL DENTISTRY

For the smiles of your life.

Xylitol Sugar Substitute Can Improve Dental Health But Is Toxic for Your Dog

The world's craving for sugar has spawned a variety of sugar substitutes as we attempt to find ways to reduce the harmful effects that can result from too much sugar – hypoglycemia, weight gain, diabetes and tooth decay being the most obvious conditions. These sugar substitutes are produced in a number of ways, some artificially and others taken from nature.

Xylitol is a sugar alcohol, a natural sweetener found in fibrous vegetables and fruit, corncobs and in hardwood trees such as birch. In use throughout the world since the 1960s, it has become more popular in the U.S. as a sugar substitute in recent years, finding its way into products like chewing gum and mints.

Much of this popularity is due to the positive health effects xylitol can offer, one of which is a reduction in tooth decay. Research has shown that xylitol is effective in balancing the acidity and alkalinity that occurs in the mouth, and as a result reduces the opportunity for decay-causing bacteria to grow.

Great for humans, but it can be toxic for dogs. Studies have shown that dogs eating foods with a high level of xylitol (100 milligrams per kilogram of dog weight) can be overcome by hypoglycemia, which can result in serious side effects such as depression, lack of coordination and seizures. These reactions can occur in as little as 30 minutes from when the dog has eaten the product. Greater doses can lead to liver failure and death.

Make sure any products you might be using with xylitol are kept out of reach of your dog so you both can enjoy good health.

