

Chewing Gum Fact Sheet



Chewing gum has been around a long time....

Since ancient times people around the world have chewed on natural materials including sweet grasses, leaves, grains and waxes. The ancient Greeks chewed mastic gum for centuries. Mastic gum comes from the bark of a tree.

The native Indians taught American colonists to quench their thirst by chewing gum. They used a gum from the bark of spruce trees.

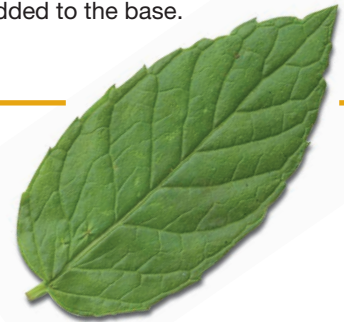
Chicle-based gum was brought to America in the early 1860s. Chicle comes from the milky juice (latex) of the sapodilla tree. This tree is found mainly in Central America.

In the olden days gum was used to:

- > Clean teeth
- > Freshen breath
- > Quench thirst
- > Exercise the jaw
- > Stimulate the gums

Today the story continues....

Now gum-base is made from man-made latex. There are two major categories of gum, chewing and bubble gum. Bubble gum is more elastic than chewing gum. Sweeteners, softeners, flavours, colourings and preservatives are all added to the base.



Did you know...

- > The most popular flavours for chewing gums come from the mint plant. To grow all the mint needed takes an area the same size as 30,550 football fields.
- > Fifty per cent of Australians regularly chew gum. Australians average over 100 servings of gum per person per year.

- > The first patent to manufacture chewing gum was awarded in December 1869 to William F. Semple. William was an Ohio dentist who used rubber to create a gum product for jaw exercise and gum stimulation.

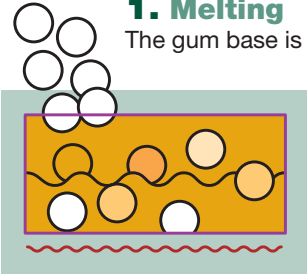


- > Research shows that chewing sugar-free gum is good for your dental health. It stimulates saliva, which helps to wash away bits of leftover food. Plaque acid is neutralised, too.

Six steps to gum manufacturing

1. Melting

The gum base is melted and purified.



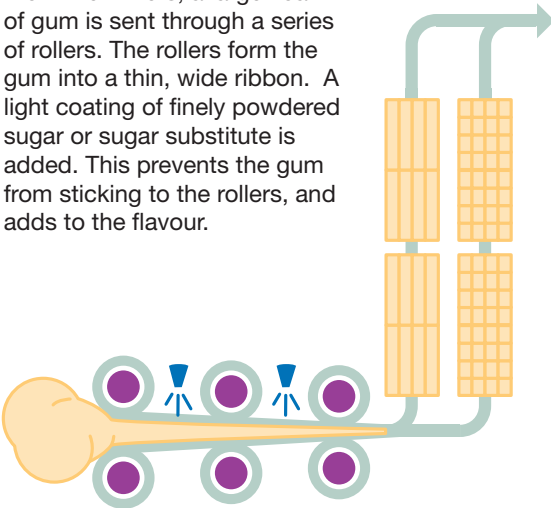
2. Mixing

The melted base is poured into a mixer. Sweeteners and flavours are added at the right time and in the right amounts, and then slowly mixed.



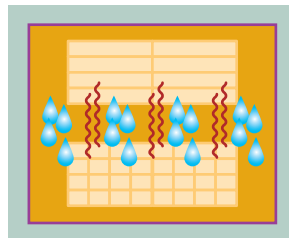
3. Rolling

From the mixers, a large 'loaf' of gum is sent through a series of rollers. The rollers form the gum into a thin, wide ribbon. A light coating of finely powdered sugar or sugar substitute is added. This prevents the gum from sticking to the rollers, and adds to the flavour.



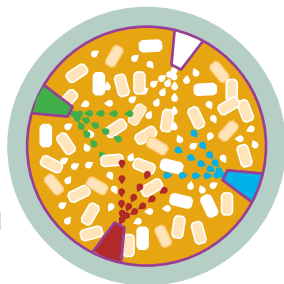
4. Scoring

The continuous ribbon of gum is scored (cut) into a pattern of rectangles. The pattern varies depending on what type of gum is being made.



6. Breaking, coating and wrapping

Next the sheets of scored gum are broken into individual pieces. For tabs of gum, the pieces are fed into a wrapping machine which wraps the tabs, applies an outer wrapper and seals the packaging. Pellets of gum are tumbled in a spray drier to form the crunchy coating. The spray is made of filtered water, sweetener and colouring. They are now ready to be packaged.



5. Conditioning

The scored gum is moved to a temperature-controlled environment to cool and 'condition'. 'Conditioning' makes sure that the finished gum is reliable and will stay fresh on the shelves.

A Sticky Issue...

Think about this!

- > Chewing gum is very sticky. It will stick wherever it is dropped or placed
- > Chewing gum is not biodegradable and does not rot away
- > Gum litter is very difficult and expensive to remove
- > Gum litter can make a real mess of your clothes

The solution is in your hands!

- > Wrap it
- > Bin it

Hints!

- > If there is no bin handy, wrap the gum and hold on to it, until you pass a bin
- > Some chewing gum comes wrapped in paper which you can save and use to wrap your finished gum



Keep Australia Beautiful.
Dispose of gum properly.

Remember:
Bin your gum
when you're done,
and don't forget
to tell your family
and friends!

If you would like more information please visit the Keep Australia Beautiful NSW website at www.kabnsw.org.au or contact us Ph 02 9633 3380 Fax 02 9633 4402 Email info@kabnsw.org.au

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