



# Xylitol

## Information Sheet



The Advantage Community

Advantage Dental Plan®

Northwest Dental Services, LLC

Northwest Professional Management, Inc.

ADP Property Management, LLC

Advantage Smiles for Kids

Xylitol gum is provided by Northwest Dental Services Inc., a dental care organization servicing the oral health needs of 80,000 Oregon Health Plan patients in rural Oregon. To order gum go to:

[www.xlear.com](http://www.xlear.com)

### Background and Effectiveness

Xylitol was discovered to have cavity fighting properties in the 1940s when the Scandinavian countries began using xylitol as a sugar substitute. By the 1950s, children in those countries were observed to have fewer cavities than children in countries still using sugar.

Xylitol is a natural sugar derived most commonly from corn cobs, corn stalks and birch trees. This sugar is unique, however, in that it contains only five carbon atoms per molecule instead of the six found in common sugar. This molecular difference is the key to xylitol's anti-bacterial properties. When exposed to this five-carbon sugar, bacteria in the mouth lose their ability to adhere to the surface of the teeth. Tooth-destroying acids are reduced and plaque is more easily brushed and rinsed out of the mouth.

Clinical studies show that the use of xylitol gum and xylitol mints can reduce cavity-causing effects in the mouth up to 80 percent.

### Instructions to Public Health Nurses, Registered Dental Hygienists and WIC Nurses

1. Instruct the pregnant mother, at 32 weeks, to rinse twice a day with chlorhexidine mouth wash for two weeks. This helps reduce cavity-causing bacteria.
2. Xylitol gum should be administered right after the pregnant mother delivers the baby.
3. The mother needs to be chewing six to eight pieces of gum per day, preferably two pieces, three to four times a day following meals. She should chew the gum for five minutes or until the flavor is gone.
4. Mothers should be given instructions on appropriate use of dental care, etc.

Each bag of xylitol gum contains a one month supply of gum for the mother. The new mother should brush her teeth at bedtime with fluoridated toothpaste and put a pea-size amount of toothpaste in her mouth following brushing, SPIT it out but NOT RINSE the toothpaste out of her mouth, let the fluoride toothpaste stay on the teeth overnight.

### Instructions to Mother Regarding the Newborn

Between six and 10 months, the baby will get their first four teeth. Usually their two front upper incisors and two front lower incisors. When this occurs, take the baby to the dentist to have fluoride varnish painted on these teeth. This can be done knee to knee with the mother holding the baby while the dentist paints the teeth. If white spots appear on the teeth, take the baby back to the dentist and have fluoride varnish painted on the teeth each week for four weeks.

