

## ALTERNATIVE SUGARS

## Honey



## NHS FP17 form printing error

It has been confirmed that there has been an error in the printing of a recent run of FP17 forms.

Dentists are advised to follow NHS Business Services Authority's (BSAs) guidance on their website to check your forms for errors and avoid delays in processing. All incorrect forms identified should be destroyed.

The guidance can be found at <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/dental-problem-print-run-fp17-forms>.

## Essential courses this November

The British Dental Association (BDA) is holding three courses on NHS regulations and employment law in November this year. The details are as follows:

**NHS claiming regulations**

Friday 10 November 2017, 9:30-16:30  
Crowne Plaza, Manchester  
<https://www.bda.org/events/Pages/NHS-regulations---to-claim-or-not-to-claim--November-2017.aspx>

**Employment law - the tricky issues**

Friday 10 November 2017, 10:00-16:30  
BDA, London  
<https://www.bda.org/events/employment-law-november-2017>

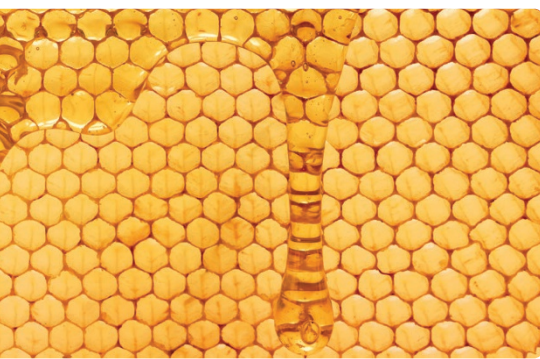
**Oral cancer - identify, refer, prevent**

Friday 3 November 2017, 10:00-16:00  
BDA, London  
<https://www.bda.org/events/Pages/Oral-cancer-identify,-refer-and-prevent--November-2017.aspx>

For general event information, visit [www.bda.org/events](http://www.bda.org/events) or call 020 7563 4590.



Elaine Gardner, British Dietetic Association (BDA) Spokesperson, discusses the sugar content in honey and provides related oral health advice.



Additionally, table honeys that we buy generally possess lower antibacterial activity than the Medical Grade Honey that is used in research.

Honey (and any products containing it) should never be given to babies under one year. Occasionally honey contains the bacteria that causes infant botulism, which is life threatening.

**Oral health impact:** Honey is composed of fermentable carbohydrate which is cariogenic.<sup>1</sup>

A recent study examined the antibacterial activity of Manuka honey against plaque-associated bacteria *in vitro* in order to evaluate the potential application as an adjunct to periodontal treatment.<sup>2</sup> It found that Manuka honey is antimicrobial towards some oral bacteria but *Streptococcus mutans*, a key pathogen responsible for dental caries, is most resistant. The authors state that Manuka honey should not be used in the treatment of periodontal disease due to the high concentrations of fermentable carbohydrates and the direct demineralising effect.

**Advice for patients:** Honey is just another form of sugar and should be consumed in moderation. Oral hygiene needs to be maintained.

- 1 Bowen W H, Lawrence R A. Comparison of the cariogenicity of cola, honey, cow milk, human milk, and sucrose. *Pediatrics* 2005; **116**: 921-926.
- 2 Safii S H, Tompkins G R, Duncan W J. Periodontal application of Manuka honey: antimicrobial and demineralising effects *in vitro*. *Int J Dent* 2017; 9874535.

**BDA** The Association of UK Dietitians

Find out more about the British Dietetic Association at: [www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com).

Coming up: Syrup

**Name:** Honey

**What is it?** Honey is produced by bees.

**Found in?** Available in most shops and supermarkets. The texture and flavour depends on which flowers the bees collect nectar from, but its composition is relatively standard.

**Effect on general health:** Honey is a sugar and is a mix of glucose and fructose. Although it has a lower glycaemic index than sugar, it is still calorie-containing and has a similar impact on blood sugar levels. For diabetics or those trying to manage blood sugar levels there is no advantage in substituting honey for sugar. It is included in the category of 'free sugars' (alongside table sugar).

Honey is reputed to contain a wide range of minor constituents that act as antioxidants and it also contains anti-bacterial agents. This is why Manuka honey from New Zealand is supposed to be beneficial, but there is insufficient evidence currently to substantiate its use in practical applications. While it certainly has bactericidal properties, the transfer to improvements in clinical conditions is limited.