

## Is the novelty wearing off?

Investigation of the erosive potential of sour novelty sweets

*Br Dent J* 2017; **222**: 613–620; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/sj.bdj.2017.363>

Lots of us love sour sweets. Not just for the chewy, moreish sensation that sweets provide, but also for that strangely addictive sour hit that makes you scrunch your face into a bulldog-chewing-a-wasp expression. The last decade has seen an increase in the popularity of sour novelty sweets and this may be a contributing factor to an increase in tooth surface loss in children. Sweet manufacturers have made a game out of sour sweets. They're no longer just about satisfying a craving. They challenge the consumer as to 'who can

eat the sourest sweet?' To us world-wise and cynical adults we can see through this; however, children may not. Therefore, this paper by Ayman *et al.* poses the questions: how erosive are these novelty sour sweets and how damaging are they for children's enamel?

The authors chose ten different types and tested the pH, the neutralisable acidity, the wettability, the viscosity and finally the erosive potential. The results showed that the erosion caused by six of the sweets was significantly higher than the erosion caused by the positive control (orange juice). Subsurface enamel loss was also significantly higher for six of the sweets (not all the same as for surface loss). The authors acknowledge the importance of temperature in relation



to the erosive potential

of the sweets, but note that

no significant difference in pH of the sweets was found between room and body temperature. The neutralisable acidity of the sweets could also contribute to erosion as most of the sweets could cause a considerable drop in intra oral pH, compared to the orange juice.

The authors conclude that it is important that dentists inform patients of the erosive potential of sour sweets. They go on to suggest that dentists should also deter patients from brushing for up to an hour after eating sour sweets so that the softened subsurface enamel has time to remineralise, and that patients should be informed of the effects of frequent consumption of sour sweets on general health.

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