

# CASE STUDY:

## Oral health promotion: the economic benefits to the NHS of increased use of sugarfree gum in the UK



The NHS spends £3.4 billion per year on primary and secondary care dental services for adults and children in England. There is a body of evidence establishing a causal relationship between chewing sugarfree gum (SFG) and reduced levels of caries and other oral health problems, yet no economic evaluations had been conducted to investigate the potential economic impact of SFG use.

YHEC worked with Plymouth University to develop an economic model to estimate potential cost-savings to the NHS via reductions in tooth decay and subsequent dental procedures resulting from increased use of SFG. The analysis examined the amount of money that could hypothetically be saved if the UK 12-year-old population chewed more SFG.

The economic model indicated that substantial cost savings might be achieved with increased SFG use, estimated to be £1 million for 1 extra chewing occasion per day,



or £8.2 million (equivalent to 364,000 dental appointments) saved for 3 chewing sessions.

The research suggests that policy designed to encourage the use of SFG could lead to significant decreases in expenditure on dental care and result in a reduction in capacity pressure on the UK dental healthcare system.

This project was sponsored by The Wrigley Company. Read more about this research in the [British Dental Journal](#)



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