

Don't Chew on This

What do sports drinks, soda, and energy drinks have in common? They all can contain large amounts of caffeine and sugar, and many students consume them in large quantities to keep their energy up during school and after-school activities. But the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) warns that there is a new product on the market—energy chews—that may give you more than a buzz; it may also harm your teeth.

Energy chews have been springing up in convenience stores, gyms, sporting goods stores, and other locations across the country. Touted as more convenient than energy drinks, the pocket-sized chews are individually wrapped, come in a variety of flavors such as citrus-mango and chocolate, and promise to deliver the same amount of caffeinated goodness as a cup of coffee. The bites have a chewy texture, and many are made with sugar, corn syrup, and artificial colors and flavors. However, if these chews contain sugar and corn syrup, from a dental standpoint it makes eating them no different than consuming sugary gum and candy, which can lead to cavities and other oral health issues.

Just like their beverage counterparts, the chews promise to enhance your energy level. But since they're about the size and shape of a piece of candy, it's all too easy to overdo it by eating too many. This can eventually lead to oral health issues, such as tooth decay, and chewing the sticky energy chews could even lead to loosened fillings or crowns.

If you decide you still need the burst promised by these energy chews, remember to also maintain good oral health by brushing and flossing regularly, ideally right after you have a chew. The MDS also recommends that you look into many of the other natural ways to take a "bite" out of your slumping energy level—such as taking a walk, adopting a healthy and balanced diet, and getting plenty of sleep at night or taking a power nap during your busy day.



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