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Does chewing gum suppress appetite?

Many individuals think that chewing gum will reduce their appetite. What does the research say about this? One study that investigated the effects of chewing gum involved 60 healthy subjects (40 women and 20 men; average age 21.7) who volunteered to participate. Of the 60 subjects, 46 were "normal" weight, nine were overweight or obese, and four were underweight. All of them were regular consumers of gum and snacks. The subjects rated their favorite gum (sugar-free or regular), and salty and sweet snacks. The gum and snacks used in the study were those the subjects preferred the most.

The subjects came to a laboratory on four separate occasions to eat a standard lunch (cheese sandwiches, green salad and fruit salad), and then returned three hours later for a snack. They were given 750 calories worth of a snack, and told to eat as much or as little as desired. When the subjects chewed their preferred gum for at least 15 minutes one hour after lunch and then again two hours after lunch, they consumed 8.2 percent fewer calo-

ries of the snacks — 36 fewer calories — compared to when they didn't chew any gum. There were no significant differences in the results

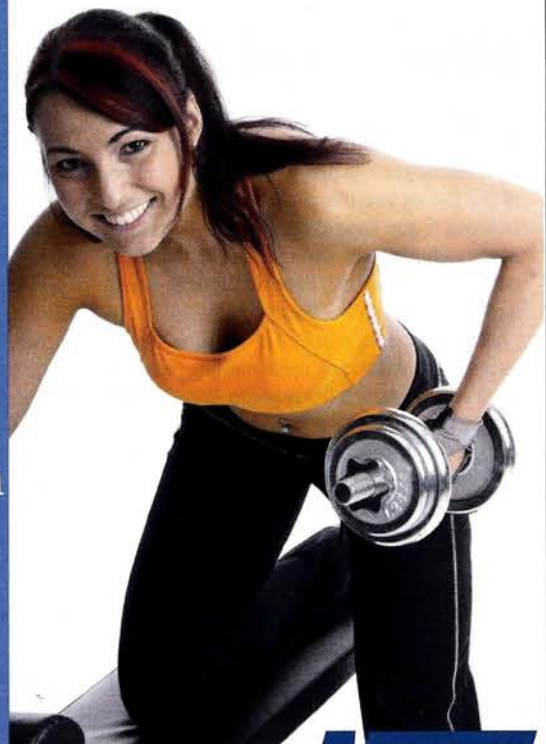
by the type of gum. So it would seem, then, that chewing gum — sugar-free or regular — does suppress appetite. **FM**



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Are video games that simulate playing sports effective at expending calories?

Statistics show that the average youth spends several hours each day watching television, using a computer and/or playing video games. Statistics also show that most youths fail to attain the recommended amount of daily physical activity. The new generation of video games that simulate playing sports or performing activities allows kids to get "screen time," yet be active. But how much does this "active gaming," or exergaming, really increase caloric expenditure?

In one study, 11 adolescents (average age 14.6) played four video games for 15 minutes each. The researchers found that active gaming (bowling, boxing and tennis) used 52 to 61 percent more calories than sedentary gaming (a racing game). The results were even better in a study of 25 children (average age 9.7) who played three video games for 15 minutes each. This study showed that active gaming (general movement and dancing) used 73 to 120 percent more calories than seden-

tary gaming (a skating game).

But let's not kid ourselves. Although active gaming uses more calories than sedentary gaming, nothing can take the place of actually participating in a real sport or activity. **FM**

Does ginkgo biloba improve memory?

Ginkgo — an extract from the leaves of ginkgo biloba — is one of the most popular herbal products in the U.S. It's mainly used as a supplement to prevent or treat memory problems. But does ginkgo live up to its expectations?

In one 12-week study, 93 older subjects (ages 55 to 79) and 104 younger subjects (ages 18 to 43) were randomly assigned to two groups: One group received 40 milligrams of ginkgo three times per day (a total of 120 milligrams), and the other group received a placebo (unspecified) that was similar in appearance. Compared to the placebo, ginkgo produced only one positive effect on memory — long-term storage and retrieval — and that was just in the older subjects. There was no significant improvement in any other meas-

ure on an extensive range of tests, including short-term memory and processing speed. No side-effects were definitively linked to ginkgo, and any side-effects experienced by the ginkgo group were mild. **FM**

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