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Mouth Bacteria Killed Off With Toothpaste With Triclosan/copolymer

A new study says that a toothpaste with triclosan/copolymer is better than regular fluoride toothpastes at killing the kinds of bacteria that live in people's mouths.

The human mouth is home to an estimated 800 to 1,000 different kinds of bacteria.

"Manufacturers add specific agents to toothpastes to provide added benefits to consumers. The best known agent is fluoride, which was added to toothpaste to prevent cavities. Triclosan added to toothpaste has been shown in a number of clinical studies to inhibit plaque and gingivitis. The copolymer helps to keep triclosan in your mouth for a longer period of time, which boosts its ability to inhibit oral bacteria," said Dr. Joseph J. Zambon, one of the study's authors and a distinguished teaching professor at the University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine.

The researchers tested the triclosan/copolymer toothpaste and two fluoride toothpastes on several different kinds of lab-grown bacteria that mimic germs found in the mouth.

The tests were also done on bacteria taken from the mouths of human volunteers.

"Repetitive testing shows that toothpaste with triclosan/copolymer outperformed the fluoride-only toothpastes when it came to inhibiting the growth of bacteria," said Zambon.

Along with brushing teeth twice a day, the AGD recommends the daily use of floss and a mouth rinse to reduce dental plaque and kill germs in the mouth.

"The importance of killing germs is that if you can keep your mouth relatively clean, you can minimize the likelihood of cavities and gum disease, as well as the unpleasantness of bad breath," said Dr. Paul Bussman, spokesperson for the AGD.

The study has been published in the latest issue of General Dentistry, the peer-reviewed clinical journal of the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD).

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