

## **Throw Your Chewing Gum in the Trash**

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From *How Stuff Works*

<http://recipes.howstuffworks.com/chewing-gum-trash.htm>

Gum doesn't biodegrade. Once gum is made, it is gum forever. This doesn't mean that gum is going to cover the surface of our earth by 2047. Gum is just a nagging environmental problem. It's litter.

There are some who think that chewing gum should be banned, because it often covers our streets and is impossible to dispose of. Cities and counties have to spend our tax dollars and use our resources to clean gum off the streets. Gum is already banned in Singapore.

Whatever your view on chewing gum, it is quite the annoying problem. You cannot compost chewing gum, because it won't break down. Your compost pile will become compost plus gum. If you swallow the gum in hopes of your stomach acid destroying it, your body will expel the gum undigested. The bubble gum will end up in the sewers.

Here are some gum facts:

- Many different types of chemicals are used to try and rid a surface of chewed chewing gum. The gum and those chemicals are then rinsed off, travel down the drain and run into the ocean.
- Some of the chemicals used to break up the chewing gum wads give off a harmful or offensive smell/odor.
- Chewing gum is not digestible. Not for humans and not for any living creature in the air or sea.
- Chewing gum is not biodegradable and will stick to its surface for many, many years until treated.
- Birds (especially young birds) have died by eating chewing gum. Chewed chewing gum is not an isolated problem that only one city or state is facing today.
- Chewing gum is a worldwide problem and is costing businesses and taxpayers millions of dollars a year to clean up.
- Annually, there is over 650,000 metric tons of chewing gum produced (2005 statistic) every year. It is predicted that in the next 5 years, over 1 million metric tons of chewing gum will be produced.
- There are over 374 trillion sticks of chewing gum made every year (not including bubble gum balls/chiclets.)
- Did you know that 374 trillion sticks of gum stacked on top of each other is approximately 2,305,800 miles high?
- Next to cigarette butts chewing gum is the second largest littering item in the world!
- The average person chews over 300 pieces of chewing gum a year.

The only way to dispose of your gum is by putting it into the garbage bin. Wrap it in a piece of scrap paper, junk mail, or a corn husk. Toss the gum in the garbage. Keep our streets clean and save our municipalities some money.

My advice, if you are worried about bad breath, grab an apple.